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The Pony Riders.—Happy Georgey Casterton.

Front.

HORPHEN 2 MTH 1828

ARBELL:

A TALE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

BY JANE WINNARD HOOPER,

AUTHOR OF

"RECOLLECTIONS OF MRS. ANDERSON'S SCHOOL," ETC. ETC.

"—A grateful mind
By owing, owes not, but still pays, at once
Indebted and discharged."

With Four Illustrations by James Godwin.

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PART I.

LITTLE ARBELL.

CHAPTER I.

CHRISTMAS EVE IN THE PARLOUR.

“Oh! if in after life we could but gather
The very refuse of our childish hours.”

CHARLES LLOYD.

IT was a cold, dull Christmas Eve, and Miss Travers sat alone in the little Green Parlour, at Eastgate House. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon,—too dark to see to read or work, and yet too light for a person of economical habits to think of ringing for a lamp, when she had nothing very particular to do, which happened, strangely enough, to be Miss Travers' case at the time. I say “strangely enough,” because her favourite maxim—one which she endeavoured to inculcate on those around her, and by which she certainly regulated her own conduct, was “*Never do Nothing.*” How she came to be doing nothing at the precise time just mentioned, I cannot tell. It was not for want of something to do, for, although it was too dark to see the letters in the book she had been reading, or to count the threads in the wristband she had been stitching, yet, there was the work she had provided for the twilight hour—the hour “between the lights,” as it is commonly called. Why was she not knitting away at one of those “plain squares” of coarse cotton,

which required no eye-sight? Had she forgotten her calculation that, in three years, these small plain squares, strongly sewed together, would make one large one, requiring only a border and a fringe, to constitute a counterpane of the most durable quality?—Indeed it seemed as if she had forgotten the counterpane, the calculation, the plain squares, nay, the very cotton itself, though it lay in a neatly wound ball on the table. There she sat, with her feet on the fender (*that*, too, was quite contrary to her personal habits and professional rules), her hands folded on her knees, and her large grey eyes fixed steadily on the fire. She seemed quite lost in thought, and started when Ponto put his fore-paws upon her black silk apron, and intimated a desire to be taken into her lap. But she did not repulse him for interrupting her reverie, as many persons would have done, she stooped directly and lifted him on her lap. Here she made him quite comfortable. That did not, however, occupy more than a minute, for Ponto was a fat little dog—too fat by half—too fat to frisk about or be playful, and therefore he fell asleep before the hands of his kind mistress had done caressing him. I am almost afraid that Ponto was like some human beings, who are too much indulged; he looked upon every act of indulgence as a right, and never thought about being grateful. When she saw that her little pet was fast asleep, and that he required no more attention from her, Miss Travers leaned back in her chair again, and, with one hand resting on Ponto's head, looked at the fire again, and went on thinking.

She thought of the Christmas Eves that she had spent long, long years before, when she was a little girl in her father's house; when she had plenty of

brothers and sisters to make merry with. She remembered that all her Christmases were merry then, and all her New Years happy ; at least they seemed so now, as she looked back upon them, from her solitary fireside. She thought of other Christmases when she was no longer a child ; when troubles had come upon her father's house ; when riches had made to themselves wings and fled away ; when her brothers and sisters, whom she loved so heartily, had all been scattered over the world, and she remained alone to comfort her parents. She remembered distinctly one Christmas Eve, when she sat on a stool at her father's feet (though she was a great girl, eighteen years old), and read a letter to him by the light of the fire—a letter which told of the death of her two eldest brothers by shipwreck. She remembered her mother's bitter cry as she read the fatal words. The next Christmas Eve, she and her father were alone ; the fond, tender mother did not live to see it. The painful struggles with ever-increasing poverty, which followed upon her mother's death—relieved only by the consciousness that if it were not for her own exertions, her father, now an invalid, would starve—all these sad days and years she remembered. Some pleasant ones, too, came back upon her mind. The hours snatched from the hard work of teaching her little school in those past years of sorrow. The kindness of several friends ; and the strong love of one, whose sympathy shed a sunshine on her life—that beloved friend, who had been a sister to her when her own sisters were dead, or had gone with their husbands to distant countries—that beautiful and graceful friend, who was, in her memory, almost perfection.

"Dear Arabella!"—as she murmured the words, a tear came into Miss Travers' eye. And then her thoughts fixed themselves on a certain Christmas Eve, ten years before, when she had seen the last of that beloved friend. She had parted from her with a painful sense of her coming unhappiness. For Arabella had married contrary to the wishes of all her family—married a man, whom they knew to be without principle. She had accompanied him to India, and Harriet Travers had not heard of or from her since.

In those ten years Miss Travers had prospered in the world. Her little school had grown into a large one; she had removed to Eastgate House; and had been able to give her father every comfort which he required in his last years. He was now dead, and Harriet was alone in the world. No; not alone, for she made many dear friends among her pupils. In spite of the occasional sharpness of her temper, Miss Travers lived a happy and a useful life. She loved teaching, and she knew much and taught well. She was never glad when the holidays came—especially the Christmas holidays. In the Midsummer holidays she generally made expeditions into the country to see her old pupils,—relations of her own, she had none. In the winter she was subject to cold and rheumatism, though she was not forty years old; this made her unable to visit at Christmas time; and thus it was that she was sitting alone in the little green parlour, at Eastgate House, on the Christmas Eve in question. Eastgate House always looked desolate in the holiday time; and just now it looked more desolate than ever, for Mrs. Vernon, one of the teachers, who generally remained there all the holidays, and to

whom Miss Travers was much attached, had gone away for a few days on a visit. Thus Miss Travers was quite solitary in the twilight ; and being solitary, she recalled a great deal of her past life, as people are apt to do on certain high days and Holy days, which are seldom days of great joy and excitement to those who have lived to see many anniversaries of them. Christmas Eve was a day associated with many sad recollections in Miss Travers' mind ; many painful events had happened to her on the anniversary of that day ; and she was thanking God, in her heart, that he had preserved her from misfortune on this particular Christmas Eve, when she was startled by a long, loud ring at the bell of the great gate, at the end of the avenue.

"Who can that be?" she thought. "Not a visitor at this hour, surely ; and in this weather?" and she turned her head towards the window.

Four o'clock had become five, and it was now dark ; but Miss Travers could see that it was snowing fast. After a few minutes' suspense, she heard steps and voices in the hall. John Green, her gardener, and his wife, Mary Green, her cook, seemed to be disputing with somebody, whose voice was strange to her.

"It is no visitor," she said to herself, "and if it is anything that concerns me, I shall know soon enough ; so we need not disturb ourselves yet, Ponto!" she added aloud, patting the dog's head. At that moment the door of the room was flung open, rather violently, by Mrs. Green, who entered immediately after, in a state of considerable excitement.

"If you please, Ma'am, here's a strange sort of young person wishes to see you! She says you

must go over with her to the King's Head, directly, to see her mistress. It's just some hoaxing trick to get money out of you, I'll be bound. I hope to goodness, Ma'am, you'll do nothing of the kind; you with your rheumatis—and it's snowing like anything! I've been telling John that he didn't ought to let in beggars, and such like. But he *would* have his way, and said if I didn't come and tell you that the young woman wanted to see you, he would come into the parlour himself, just as he is, out of the cowhouse! So that's why I came. I know very well it's all an imposition."

"We must not be so sure of that, Mary," said her mistress, who, knowing that it was an immense pleasure to good Mrs. Green to talk, generally allowed her to do so, when it did not interrupt more important business. "We cannot be sure of that. Did she mention her mistress's name; or say why her mistress does not come to me?"

"She didn't mention no names, Ma'am, but she brought this letter; and said that her mistress was dying. It's a regular got up petition, I'll be bound!"

"Why, Mary," said her mistress, somewhat angrily, "what makes you so uncharitable to-day? Give me the letter. Take the young woman to the kitchen fire, and bring me a lamp, that I may see what it is all about."

Mrs. Green shut the door with an unnecessary fling, muttering something about "Missis always being took in by impostors." This unnecessary fling brought a sudden draught of air to the fire, and caused some coals to start into a bright flame. Miss Travers did not, therefore, wait till the lamp came, but unfolded the sheet of paper. There were

very few words written there; and badly as they were written, she read them in a moment, for the hand-writing was familiar.

"DEAREST HARRIET,—Come to me without a moment's delay. I am dying.

"Your old friend,

"ARABELLA DUDLEY."

Up started Miss Travers, and down fell Ponto.

In another moment she had reached the hall, just as Mrs. Green was conducting the stranger to the kitchen with the worst grace in the world. To her astonishment her mistress seized the stranger by the arm, and said, in an agitated manner, "where is Mrs. Dudley?"

"At the Inn, close by, Ma'am. There is not a moment to lose. I do not like to stay away from her; but she would make me come to you. She wanted to be sure that you had the letter."

"Yes! yes!" said Miss Travers, taking down an old cloak, that hung in the hall, and throwing it over her, "I am ready."

And before the voluble Mrs. Green could bring any words to bear upon the new turn which affairs had taken, her mistress was already out in the snow, and half way down the avenue. The strange young woman kept pace with her, and not till the falling snow and the darkness quite hid them, did Mrs. Green give vent to her astonishment.

"Well! well! what is to be will be! If Miss Travers don't get her death this time, it wont be for want of imprudence. Her father was right (God bless him!)—'you can't put old heads upon young shoulders, and there are some old shoulders that never get old hearts under them; and yours

are of that kind, Harriet, my dear,' he used to say.—I'm sure that's true!—there's not a younger or a warmer heart than Missis's; tho' if she do be a bit cross now and then. It's a pity she's not a rich lady, instead of keeping a school—then she'd have more time and more money to give away in charity. And then she'd have nothing to plague her and put her out of temper, as she has now. And no wonder! I'm a sweet temper myself, and always was; but if I had twenty-five young ladies to teach and look after, besides teachers and masters, I should go raving mad in a week." And Mrs. Green went down stairs to communicate the strange event that had taken place to the other servants.

CHAPTER II.

CHRISTMAS EVE IN THE KITCHEN.

"Good mistresses make good servants."

SIX o'clock passed—seven o'clock came—eight,—nine,—and yet Miss Travers did not return. The servants became somewhat anxious, and John Green put on his great coat and his great comforter and sallied forth to make inquiries concerning his mistress at the King's Head. On his return he was half-blinded with the snow, which was falling so thickly that "it made it light enough to see the darkness," he said. Had he ever read Milton's "Paradise Lost," he would have expressed the same meaning in the well-known line about "darkness visible :" but John Green read no book but his Bible. When he had shaken off the snow, at the back door, his wife came to help him off with his coat.

"No, no," he said, kindly, "keep you by the fire, Mary. It's a dreadful cold night. I'll shut the door, and fasten it up." "Well, anyhow, this is a regular old-fashioned Christmas," he added, when he had taken his place at the kitchen fire again. "The snow is a foot deep in the avenue already ; and it's falling, falling, falling, as steadily as if it never meant to leave off. It's a sad Christmas Eve for them as has no home and no fireside. I mind once when I lived on Stainmore——"

"Well, I never did see such a man!" exclaimed Sarah, with a look half laughing, half indignant, "when we are dying to know what it is that is keeping Missis out so late, here he is going to begin one of his everlasting North-Country stories! Now just put this one off till after supper, and tell us what's become of Missis."

There was a twinkle in John Green's eye, which said as plainly as possible, to those who were well acquainted with his face and habits, "There! just what I wanted! Women are always so curious, and I like to tease them a bit!"

His wife, who knew his taste in this respect, sat still, toasting bread for the elder wine which the servants were to have after their supper. She was dying with curiosity to hear what was going on at the King's Head; but, by a marvellous self-control, she kept her tongue from asking a single question. She knew by experience that John would tell soon enough if he were not asked; but that if she showed any curiosity it would be his delight to baffle it. So she went on turning the bread on the fork, and saying nothing.

At last John rubbed his hands, and said, "there will be fine cooking of spoon-meat for you, Mary, my dear: there's a baby coming!"

"A what!" exclaimed Mary, letting the toast fall, and staring blankly at her husband. "A baby, that's all!" he replied, rubbing his hands again.

"What *do* you mean?" inquired Sarah and Susan in a breath, desisting from the pleasant occupation of trimming smart caps for the morrow.

"I mean *this*,—that you must put away all that finery, and go up stairs and get the little crib ready, in Missis's room, directly. You are to light a fire

there, and to have everything comfortable for the baby and the nurse. She says the nurse is to sleep in the dressing-room, Missis says, and she gave me them keys for you to get out sheets and blankets *and setterer*. They will all be here in a short time. The lady can't live another hour, Mrs. Wood says."

The three women looked at each other in amazement. John looked on, and enjoyed the sight. "Is it one of your tricks, John?" asked his wife, imploringly. "Tell us really what *is* the matter, or I must put on my bonnet and shawl, and go over to the King's Head myself."

Fearing that she might do this, John, who was in the main a good-hearted fellow, sat down and told them all he knew, which was simply this. Their mistress was attending the death-bed of a lady, a Mrs. Dudley, who seemed to be an old and beloved friend. Mrs. Wood, the landlady at the King's Head, said she was a real grand lady, not at all old, and quite beautiful, though she was dying. She had a little girl with her, and the young person who had brought the note to Miss Travers. After he had learned all he could from Mrs. Wood, he had sent her up stairs with a message to his mistress, asking if he or any of the other servants could be of any use. She came down to speak to him, looking so pale and wretched that he hardly knew her. She had given the orders which he had just delivered to the housemaids, in a quick, low voice, and had then hurried up stairs again, as if she could not bear to stop away from the sick chamber. "Ah!" said John, by way of conclusion, "if all single ladies was as ready to leave their comfortable firesides on a night like this,

to attend upon sick persons and young children, we should hear no more talk about the selfishness of old maids."

"Don't call Missis an old maid!" exclaimed Sarah, laughing, "she's not forty yet. How do you know she may not be married yet? She's a handsome woman, many people think."

"No, no, Miss Harriet Travers will never marry, I know that," said John, gravely. "I've known her ever since she was *that* high."

"I wish sometimes," said Sarah, "that she had a child of her own, instead of wasting all her time and trouble upon the school young ladies. As soon as ever they get old enough to be grateful to her, they are taken away." So saying, Sarah took Susan with her to make the preparations which Miss Travers had ordered, leaving Mr. and Mrs. Green to continue their talk.

"Who knows?" said John, "perhaps the child that is coming here to-night may be one that will not be taken away from her. It may have no friends in the world, and that may be why the mother sent for Missis, knowing how good and charitable she is. That's the Travers' character all over their native place."

"I'm thinking about that young person—the nurse," said Mrs. Green. "I was a little rough with her, for you know how Missis is always imposed upon by impostors, and I certainly took her for one. If she's an honest, faithful servant, that sticks to her Missis when she's in trouble and when she's dying, I'm very sorry, and I hope you'll all be kind to her, and we must make her comfortable, though we can't make her a very merry Christmas-time. She looked as if she had been in foreign

parts. Perhaps she has no friends in London ! Poor thing ! Well, she has come to a good house for kind treatment. Missis and servants—I will say that for them—they've all feeling hearts, and show it too."

"That's mainly because the Missis has one, I'm thinking," said John. "If she hadn't, you and I and the rest could never do a good turn for the poor folks about, except on the sly."

"She don't lose by it, I know," said Mrs. Green, carefully putting aside some dry pieces of bread, and thinking to herself, "they will make a pudding for the kitchen."

"It's the best plan for a Missis to *trust* her servants," she continued aloud, "when she gets a good character with them ; and no lady takes one with a bad character, I suppose. In other places I've lived in, the lady always locked up things from the servants. I like Miss Travers' plan best. From the moment she said to me, 'Mrs. Green, I give you free access to the store-room. I place full confidence in you, and shall expect you to be as saving for me as you would be for yourself. Use as much as you want of everything, but never waste the smallest thing. I would much rather that you gave it away. I cannot afford to give much away, because I am not rich ; but there are many broken meats in a large household like this, which I give you full leave to make the best of for the poor'—when she said *that*, I knew what sort of lady she was ; and I've been more economical for her than ever I was for other ladies, who always kept a sharp look-out over me, just as if I had been a thief. It was the way to make me one, if I had not been thorough honest. Leastways, it

made me careless, and more glad than sorry, when I saw things spoiling, or any sort of extravagance going on. I never took any pains to prevent it I know."

"Well, you take pains enough now to prevent any extravagance in the kitchen. I declare you're quite stingy; and those girls, Sarah and Susan, are getting into your way. I'm heartily glad of it, though. That's the way to help your Missis to make a fortune. A penny saved's a penny gained."

"She'll never make a fortune, John. She is a deal too generous."

"I'm not so sure that generous people are not better off, in the end, than mean ones," said John.

"How do you make that out? Do you really think Missis will be better off for taking this poor child into her house, for instance, which I'll be bound she intends to do, whether it has friends to pay for it or not?"

"Yes, I do," said John. "You see, Mary, what makes one person happy don't make another happy. Miss Travers could never be happy to be as rich as old Mrs. Screw, if she had to live as old Mrs. Screw does. She loves to give away, and not to hoard. Now, she don't give away foolishly. No, she is what I call a sensible-generous woman; and such like don't bring themselves to poverty. However much they give away, a great deal more comes back to them. They work hard, and they spend liberally and charitably. They may not make a fortune, in money; but God never lets them want. 'He that giveth to the poor, lendeth unto the Lord;' and we know that 'He returneth to us our own with usury.'"

"I'm sorry she is obliged to keep a school. I often think it is a pity she is not married, and has not children of her own," said Mrs. Green.

"I used to think so once; but God knows best," said John. "I lived groom with her father when she was a slip of a girl; and I think I know why she is not married. The man who would have made the proper husband for her died years ago. I think it's a good deal better that she should be as she is, than married to any one she did not really love."

"Ah! that it is, I'm sure, John."

"And don't you think she does a deal of benefit to the young ladies?"

"Yes, I hear that she knows a deal more than any of the teachers. Setting that aside, I think her plan of bringing the elder ones down into the kitchen, and letting them see about house-work and cooking, is capital. They will learn very much better how to treat servants than most of them would at home, I'll warrant. Still, I wish Missis had something like a chick or child of her own. Something that she could love and keep with her always. As you say, *who knows?* Perhaps this baby that is coming may be a comfort to her?"

This was the way in which Miss Travers' servants spoke of her. I have set down some of their conversation, because I think there is no better way of learning a great deal about the general character of people,—children as well as grown-up persons,—than by hearing what their servants think and feel about them. Servants are, often, better informed about the disposition and temper of their superiors than any other persons can possibly be. I wonder whether my young readers have formed

to themselves a favourable or unfavourable opinion of Miss Travers, of Eastgate House, from what has been said! They must not forget that Mrs. Green said she "had a sharp temper." Perhaps she was not amiable. We shall see.



CHAPTER III.

AN ADDITION TO THE FAMILY.

“A little child—a limber elf—
Singing, dancing to itself.”

COLERIDGE.

IT was twelve o’clock that night when a hired carriage, from the King’s Head, toiled slowly up the snowy avenue of Eastgate House. Just as it stopped at the open hall-door, where all the anxious servants were assembled, with lights, to receive their mistress, the joy-bells of the church rung out merrily. Christmas Eve had passed into Christmas Day. The sound of those merry bells sent a thrill of pain to Miss Travers’ heart, as, with a child in her arms, she alighted, and stood amidst the group.

“You are all tired with sitting up,” she said, gently. “Go to bed. I do not want anything. Carry the light up stairs for me, Sarah.—Hannah!” and she turned to the young woman who had accompanied her, and who was weeping silently, “come with me.” Poor Hannah followed to Miss Travers’ bed-room. Adjoining it was a small dressing-room, which had been prepared for her. Miss Travers laid down the child gently on her own bed, and then conducted Hannah to the dressing-room.

"I thought you would like to sleep in this room."

"Thank you, Ma'am," sobbed Hannah; "but where is Miss Arbell to sleep? I cannot leave her till I see she is comfortable."

"Come, then, and we will put her into her little crib, in my room."

They returned thither, and Hannah took the shawls off the sleeping child, who then appeared, clothed in a little white night-gown, ready to be put into bed. Sarah, who had watched this operation, reported to Susan that it was the prettiest child she had ever seen; and that Hannah seemed very loath to leave it, and go to her own bed. She cried a great deal over it, and at last Miss Travers gently forced her to retire. Poor Hannah! She was worn out with weeping and fatigue; and she slept soundly and long when she at last lay down. It was the first time that she had been in bed for a week.

Miss Travers sat down before the fire in her bed-room as soon as she was alone. And she remained there, deep in thought, for an hour or more. All was then still in the house. She stepped into the next room, and saw that the faithful Hannah had forgotten all her troubles, and was sleeping peacefully. She returned to her own room, and held the light over the child. It is impossible to watch a sleeping child unmoved. Miss Travers had not shed one tear by the death-bed of her friend; but now the tears gushed from her eyes. She set down the light and sank on a chair, with her arm thrown above the child's head on its little pillow.

I cannot tell you all that passed in her mind; but

she resolved to fulfil her promise to its mother, and bring up this little one as if it were her own. Then she prayed that God would bless her charge, and that she might be an instrument in his hands of rearing a human being to do His will.—She prayed, also, that God would put a love for her into the heart of this little child ;—that it might be to her as if it were her own. Then she thought of the poor mother's agony in parting from her child,—of all her sufferings, and of her friendless state. Dying at an Inn,—away from all those nearest and dearest to her ;—far away from the husband whose cruelty she had fled from, and whom, with her dying breath, she forgave. But over all the many thoughts and feelings that crowded on her mind, sounded the words of her friend,—“ Harriet ! as you hope for mercy when you die, never forsake my sweet Arbell ! Be a mother to her !—I would rather leave her in your care than with her proud relations. They will never claim her ;—keep her for your own.”

Thinking over this last sad scene, and all the events of her friend's life, the greater part of the night passed away, and a streak of red was in the eastern sky when Miss Travers kissed her new treasure, for the last time, and retired to bed.

When she woke it was broad day-light. The sun was shining brightly into the room. There was a sound of singing, too. Yes ; it was the children from the Sunday-school singing a hymn beneath the window—the Christmas hymn which she had taught them. Their fresh young voices rung out sweetly in the frosty air :—

“ Hark ! the herald angels sing,
‘ Glory to the new-born King ! ’ ”

Miss Travers was not thoroughly awake. It seemed to her as if some of the voices were in the room. She raised herself a little in the bed to listen. Ah ! was that a beautiful spirit, standing in the sunlight by the window, with white robe and golden curls—its sweet voice following the melody, and its blue eyes gazing with wonder into the distance? For one moment the vision blended with her dreams, and with the sacred song :—

“ Hark ! the herald angels sing,
‘ Glory to the new-born King ! ’ ”

But the delusion was only for a moment.

“ It is the child ! It is my little Arbell ! ” she said to herself. “ Dearer to me than all the heavenly host is that little creature of earth, that, by God’s help, I will teach to know and love His will.”

She watched the beautiful child as it tried to imitate the song ; and as she looked, she thought that in all nature there was no sight so touching as a pure and happy infant singing to itself in very gladness of heart. Suddenly she remembered what had befallen that unconscious child a few hours before. “ What shall I say to her when she asks for her mother ? ”

As that thought crossed her mind, little Arbell turned her head towards the bed, and called out, in a sweet baby voice, “ Wake ! mamma, wake ! pretty mugik ! ”

“ Come here, my love,” said Miss Travers, in as soft a tone as she could command. Little Arbell stared hard at the sound of a strange voice, and put her finger on her lip. Miss Travers sat up in bed, and stretched her arms towards the child. “ Come

to me, Arbell. It is warm here. Come and let me warm you."

There was something in the invitation which seemed to suit the little girl. It was a frosty morning, and she was standing in her night-gown; therefore, she crept down from the window-seat and came to the bed. Miss Travers took her into it; and there she lay for some moments, with her golden head on the white pillow, and her great blue eyes wandering over Miss Travers' countenance.

"I don't know you," she said at last, in her pretty baby fashion, but without any fear.

"Not yet; but you will know me soon, and love me."

"Shall I? Does mamma love you?" asked the little thing.

"Yes, my darling. And if you are a good girl, I shall love *you* very much. Everybody will love you very much."

"Mamma says so, too. I am good to-day. Where is mamma?" And she started up, and began to look round the room.

"Mamma is not here. Look, Arbell! Something pretty." And Miss Travers, anxious to turn the child's thoughts from her mother, actually snatched from the watch-pocket her beautiful gold watch, which she never allowed any one to touch, and gave it into Arbell's hands. The little thing seized on it with wonder and delight; and while she was turning it round and round in her soft little hands, Miss Travers was turning round in her mind the difficulty of answering the child's questions about mamma. She was only three years old; too young, Miss Travers thought, to

comprehend the idea of death ; but not too young to grieve passionately, for a short time, at the absence of her mamma. She made up her mind, what she would say, the next time Arbell asked for mamma. This was not till she was tired of her new plaything. She then said—

“ Why not Hannah come ? Arbell want get up.”

“ Poor Hannah is very tired. I will dress Arbell.”
And Miss Travers proceeded to do so.

While she was being washed, she made inquiries concerning Susan, who had brought up the warm water. “ *Your servant !* ” she asked, “ who are you ? ”

This was a puzzling question ; but Miss Travers was quick-witted, and answered, readily, “ Aunt Harriet.”

“ Oh ! ” replied little Arbell. “ That’s a funny name. Do you live here ? Is this house yours ? ” On being answered in the affirmative, she paused, and then asked, “ where is mamma ? Will you take me to her when I am dressed ? ”

“ I cannot take you to mamma, now.”

“ Why not ? ”

“ Because she is gone away.”

“ Mamma gone away from Arbell ! ”—and the bright face became clouded, the little rosy lips quivered, and tears streamed from the blue eyes. But the child made no loud noise—she sobbed silently, “ naughty mamma ! ”—There was a strong sense of injury in the tone, which Miss Travers tried to remove.

“ No ! Arbell must not say *that*. Mamma is not naughty ; she was obliged to go away.”

“ Who made her go away ? ”

“ God.”—

The child looked up to the clear blue sky, and seemed to think for a moment, while the big tears still stood on her cheek. "Does God want mamma?"

"Yes, my darling. God has sent for mamma to make her happy. She has been very ill, and now God has taken her, to make her quite well and happy again."

"Poor mamma has been very ill!" repeated the little thing. "The Doctor sent Arbell away. Naughty Doctor!—Will mamma come back soon?"

"No, my dear."

"Why not? Will not God let her come?—Mamma will cry. Mamma love little Arbell. She must come back." And the tears began to flow again.

Poor Miss Travers folded the child in her arms, and allowed her to sob to her heart's content; kissing her, and murmuring the soft nonsense that soothes an infant's sorrow better than the finest sense.

"What for you cry, too?" said the little thing, after her fit of weeping was over, and taking Miss Travers' face between her two little fairy hands.

"Because I do not like to see my little Arbell unhappy."

"I am *mamma's* little Arbell."

"But when mamma went away she said you would be *my* little Arbell, till God should fetch you to be with her again. Will you be Aunt Harriet's little Arbell?"

The child threw her arms round Miss Travers' neck, and said, "Yes. Will you love me?—Will you ask God to bring mamma back soon?"

"I will love you very much, my darling. But listen to me—I cannot ask God to bring back mamma, because He has taken her to be happy with Him. It would be unkind to make her come back. She is happy with God."

Miss Travers then told Arbell, in the simplest language, that her mamma would never come back to her any more, but that some day she would go to her mamma. She ended by assuring her that people were always happy who went away to God.

The little thing looked thoughtful for a moment, and then said, stoutly, "*No! No!* Mamma not happy with God. Mamma not happy without Arbell."

"God can do everything that He likes. He can make mamma happy without Arbell, and He can make Arbell happy without mamma."

"Can he?" asked the child, in much wonder. "Hannah says God loves good little children—does He love me when I cry for mamma?"

"Yes, my darling, He loves you always. And I will love you, and Hannah will love you. Arbell is going to be a happy, good little girl. Shall we go down stairs and have some breakfast?"

The little thing heaved a deep sigh, and then nodded assent to this proposition; and they went down stairs together. She soon forgot her first trouble in her curiosity concerning the many new things which met her eyes. In the first place, the great stair-case, with its sky-light at the top, which, as they passed down, admitted a strong light, struck her as being remarkably gay and cheerful. The green parlour, too, with sun-light streaming in, made ten times more brilliant than

usual by the reflection of the snow, which covered lawn, trees, and everything outside. This green parlour, with its pretty striped walls, and pictures in gilded frames; the white breakfast cloth and blazing fire, made such a favourable impression upon the child's susceptible mind, that it was never effaced. The green parlour (in reality a small, unpretending room) became her favourite abiding place in after life. It is said that early impressions are lasting. It is certain that they were so with little Arbell Dudley.

She stood in the middle of this said green parlour and examined it, without speaking, from side to side, from ceiling to floor, from door to window. If she had been a little upholsterer, about to make a catalogue of its contents, she could not have examined them more attentively.

"I like your house, Aunt Harriet," she said, at length, in a tone of cordial approbation, "I like it better than the ship."

"The ship," thought Aunt Harriet. "What does the child mean?"

"Your house stands still. The ship went *so*." And the child began to imitate the motion of a vessel on the water. Then Aunt Harriet began to recollect that it was but three days since the child had left the ship which had brought her from India. While she was imitating the ship, little Arbell lost her balance, and fell on her hands and knees on the rug. I have much pleasure in telling you, little girls, that she did not cry. She had not hurt herself. She looked up and laughed. It is always better to laugh than to cry, when you fall down; unless, indeed, you are very much hurt, and cannot help crying with the pain. Now,

just as Arbell looked up at her kind new friend, Ponto, who had been asleep under the table, crept out and shook himself before the fire, just in front of her pretty little face. She almost screamed with delight, and laid her hands on his curly coat directly, crying out, “Ittle doggy! ittle doggy!”

Ponto was a white and tan spaniel, rather pretty; but, as I said before, too fat. He generally had a very quiet life—it consisted chiefly of eating and sleeping. If he ever thought about anything, it was about the flies—what troublesome creatures they were; and so small that they were scarcely worth the labour of catching. Or perhaps he thought about the canary-bird, that hung in the window of the green parlour, and made a great noise when the sun shone, or when any one was talking; so that he (Ponto) could scarcely hear himself bark. What was the good of a canary-bird? he thought; and he would look at his mistress when she went up to the cage and talked to it, and be quite surprised that a lady of her sense, who had a spaniel to caress, should ever waste her time with such a silly creature as that little yellow bird. Ponto thought a great deal of himself, as most idle folks do.

When he felt Arbell’s hands on his back, he turned round rather sharply, and growled. I don’t know how it was; but, in a moment, he left off growling, and wagged his tail when she poked her little nose into his eye, and said, again, “Ittle doggy! ittle doggy!” Miss Travers was pleased to see that her new favourite was likely to agree so well with the old one; and she sat looking on while they played together till her tea was almost cold.

"Now, my darling, we must all have some breakfast. You, and I, and Ponto."

"Let Arbell give Ponto his breakfast?" This request was granted; and then a high chair was placed at the table, and Arbell's basin of bread and milk was set before her, and she eat her first meal in Eastgate House.

"What for the bells ringing?" she asked, as the joy-bells rung out once more.

"Because it is Christmas-day."

"Humph!" said little Arbell. She had no idea what Christmas-day was.

Hannah entered the room at that moment. As soon as the child caught sight of her she clapped her hands, and said, "Hannah! Hannah! Arbell is so happy! Is not this a nice room! Where have you been?" She was just going to say, "where is mamma?" when Ponto jumped up and drew her attention to him. Down she got from her chair to show Hannah how pretty he was, and how well he could play.

"Has she ever been to church?" asked Miss Travers, aside to Hannah.

"No, Ma'am."

"I think she shall go with me to church this morning, and you must bring her away before the sermon," said Miss Travers. "How are you this morning?"

"Much better, thank you, Ma'am," and Hannah came a step nearer, as if she had something important to say; "but I am uneasy in my mind about Miss Arbell, Ma'am. I cannot bear to go away from her. I love her so much. She has never had any other servant. She did not like the *ayah*. She would go to no one but me when she was a

baby. Oh ! Ma'am, you can't think how that little blessed innocent winds her way into your heart ! What *will* she do without me ? You are very kind and good, Ma'am, but she is used to me. She will miss *me* ; and I can't bear to think of parting from her. If you will please to take me as a servant, Ma'am, I would want no wages, and I would make myself very useful. I can make dresses, and get up fine linen. I was poor dear Mistress's own maid, and I am sure she would give me a good character, if she was alive again. I would scrub and scour, and clean knives and shoes. I would do anything, only to be in the same house with that darling child. It is a hard thing to part with those we love, Ma'am."

And Hannah's tears began to flow ; and she turned away so that Arbell, who was busy with Ponto, might not see her weep. Miss Travers was much pleased at this proof of affection in one whom the world would consider merely as a hired servant. She turned round kindly, and putting her hand on Hannah's shoulder, said, "Your affectionate heart shall not be pained, I will keep you as a servant ; you shall take charge of little Arbell and do needle work, and I will pay you the same wages that you have been accustomed to receive."

It is no exaggeration to say that Hannah was ready to fall at Miss Travers' feet and kiss them, she was so full of joyful thanks. She caught the child up in her arms and almost smothered her with kisses.

"I shall not leave you, my darling ! Hannah will not go away."

Arbell was quite alarmed at the words "go away." "Go away !" she repeated, with a fearful expres-

sion. "No! Arbell don't like you to go away. You will not go away?" she inquired, eagerly stretching out her arms to Miss Travers, "I love you—you must not go away. Nobody must go away from Arbell any more—not Hannah—not Aunt Harriet." Then she stopped suddenly, and looking from one to the other, she said, "When God sends for you to go to him you must take Arbell with you. Will you? We can see mamma then. Mamma has gone to God, Hannah, and he will not let her come back. She has left little Arbell." And the child looked full of pain and much puzzled.

"Take her with you to look over the house," whispered Miss Travers. "Make her forget her trouble, she cannot understand it."

Arbell was, upon the whole, very happy during that first day in her new home. Her observing powers were very active, and she exercised them incessantly the whole day. The house,—the servants,—the cows,—the poultry,—the snow,—the walk to church,—the carriages on the road,—the people whom she saw walking about,—the beautiful large church,—the clergyman,—the little charity children in front of the great gallery,—the sound of the singing and the organ,—all impressed her mind vividly. This was the first day of her life which she remembered distinctly when she grew up to be a woman. What, she thought, made the greatest impression of all on her mind, was seeing Miss Travers kneeling down in prayer during the service. She did not quite understand what prayer meant, though she had been taught to say the Lord's Prayer night and morning, and to pray that God would "bless papa and mamma, and make Arbell a good little girl." It was a new thing to

her to see a grown-up lady kneeling down and praying to God. Arbell knew that she was praying to God, because she understood some of the words that were said. She climbed quietly on to the seat of the pew and looked round the church. There she saw everybody kneeling down and holding books in their hands, and seeming to pray ; the old men and women, and the fine ladies and gentlemen, and the little boys and girls in the gallery, and the clergyman in his white robe. Everybody seemed to be praying to God ; so, thinking she would do like other people, she got down again, and went and knelt close beside Miss Travers. Then she said in a very low whisper, "may I pray to God too?"

Miss Travers smiled tenderly, and whispered, "yes, my darling."

Then little Arbell bent her head down, and joined her hands, and thought what she should say. Miss Travers' heart was moved when she overheard her, in a soft low tone, saying over and over, "pray God send dear mamma back to little Arbell. Pray God make Arbell a good girl!" That was Arbell's first prayer. The first prayer that came from her heart to the great God who made all the world, and who, she had been told, loved her and would listen to her. She had a clear remembrance of that first prayer in after years ; it made her feel quite happy to think that such a little girl as she was might pray to God as Aunt Harriet did.

CHAPTER IV.

MULTUM IN PARVO.

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

THE last was a long chapter; this will be a short one, though it will pass over a good many years, and the last only contained the account of some things which happened in one day—the Christmas-day when little Arbell first found herself in Eastgate House. This is as you will find it in life. Some days and weeks appear to us longer than months and years, and take a great deal more time and words to describe. When nothing particular happens from one month's end to another, the days pass away very quickly, and when they are gone we scarcely remember them. We only say afterwards "that it was a quiet, pleasant time." This is always supposing that people are properly employed. When we are idle the time hangs heavily on our hands; we are uncomfortable without knowing why; we want something to happen, without knowing exactly *what*. Every day seems a great deal too long. We don't like to get up in the morning, and we don't like to go to bed at night. And when we look back upon that wasted portion of our life, we say, "that was a very dull, miserable time! I should not like it to come over again!"

It was from having learned by experience that idle people are never happy, that Miss Travers endeavoured to make all her young people industrious, especially little Arbell, whom she loved the most. She never suffered Arbell to *waste* time. Do not suppose from this that Arbell was never allowed to amuse herself, or to laugh and play. Quite the contrary. Miss Travers, or Aunt Harriet, as Arbell called her, did not think that girls *wasted* time when they were playing and jumping about, or amusing themselves in any proper way. She thought a great many ways of amusing themselves *proper* which other governesses did not. She thought some games which are called *romping* games were very proper for girls, because they made them strong and healthy ; she thought it was quite proper that they should sing, and shout, and laugh aloud in the play-ground, because it was good for their lungs, and never complained that they made too much noise. She said it was natural and right that girls should make a noise when they were at play as well as boys. No ; what Miss Travers meant by *wasting* time, was not *making use of it* in any way—either in work or in play. She did not like to see any one sauntering, or moping, or fidgeting from one thing to another, yet, actually, employed with none. “If you have no work to do, and do not want to think, my dear,” she would say, “go and play ; but *never do nothing*.” All the girls in Eastgate House knew this maxim ; and when they became women they generally thanked Miss Travers for having made them act upon it when they were young. “I think it one of the most important things for young people to form a habit of industry,” she used to say. “It is the groundwork of

all good, as idleness is the root of all evil. Once let a girl acquire a habit of doing *something*, and I have hopes of her becoming a useful and a happy woman; but if she have a habit of being idle, and do not make haste to cure it, she can never be either useful or happy."

Young people will not always employ their time to the best advantage; but only let them have a habit of employing it, so that they are positively uncomfortable if they are doing nothing, and there is no fear but that they will discover, in time, what is the best thing for them to do.

For the first few years of her residence at Eastgate House, Arbell learned little more than the habit of *doing something*,—though that something was chiefly play. You may fear that a little orphan, without any relations to care for her, would not be a happy child; on the contrary, few children have so happy a childhood as Arbell had.

In the first place, every one in the house was fond of her: Aunt Harriet, and Mrs. Vernon, and the other teachers; all the servants, and Hannah especially, were too much disposed to spoil her: she was petted and fondled by them all. Then as to the school-girls, she was an invaluable plaything, and a little queen among them. They considered her the most beautiful, the most clever, the most charming child in the world: they indulged her in every possible way; and sometimes so injudiciously, that Miss Travers was obliged to keep her out of the school-room, lest she should become selfish and domineering before she could speak plainly. She was not sent into the school-room to learn, until she was seven years old; but, before that time, she always went out into the play-ground during the

hours of recreation, and thus had the advantage of many playmates. It is scarcely possible to be happier than little Arbell was in childhood : she was the darling of a numerous household, and scarcely ever had a wish ungratified. As she grew older, she used to talk with Miss Travers and Hannah about her mamma who was buried in the Church close by, and whose grave she frequently visited. She never talked to the school-girls about her mamma or her papa : sometimes she wondered what difference there was between the feeling she had for her Aunt Harriet and that which the other girls had for their parents.

When she was about twelve years old, she began to give some trouble ; and she was sometimes unhappy, and made Miss Travers displeased with her ; in short, Arbell was growing a great girl, and her joys and sorrows were growing great too. When she was thirteen, an important event occurred in her life. I will now pass, at once, to that period ; and after showing what sort of a girl Arbell was then, and what sort of a life she led, I will tell you what this important event was.

PART II.

ARBELL, THE SCHOOL GIRL.

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CHAPTER I.

ARBELL AND HER FRIENDS.

"Friendship is a sheltering tree."—COLE RIDGE.

"ARBELL! little Arbell! Dear little Arbell! where are you?"—cried Georgy Casterton, as, with her bonnet already tied, and her gloves in her hand, she ran from one bed-room to another.

The bed-rooms were in a state of unusual disorder, for it was the breaking up day at Eastgate House; and the school-girls, in their joyful eagerness to go home, had set at defiance Miss Travers' rules concerning "neatness in the dormitories," and had put nothing away after them. Georgy made her way, with some difficulty, calling out the name of her friend as she entered every room; but in none of the bed-rooms was little Arbell to be found. "Where can she be?" thought Georgy,—"I can't go home without bidding *her* good-bye."

She went hurriedly down the stairs again, towards the noisy school-room, where the girls were waiting to be fetched, and were singing and laughing, in the wildest glee, at the thought of the holidays, and the pleasures of home. She paused at the door,—"I don't think she can be there. Poor thing! It would make her very unhappy to see them all so merry, and she, with no home to go to, and obliged to spend all her holidays here;

—what a dreadful fate!” thought Georgy Casterton. Just then a servant came out of the school-room.

“Hannah, do you know where Miss Arbell is?”

“Yes, Miss Casterton, I think she is *there*,” replied Hannah, pointing to a door at the end of a long, narrow passage, down which Georgy had certainly never thought of looking.

“There?—what, in the Punishment-room! Who put her there?—on the day when all the other girls are going home, too!—I’m sure Miss Travers would not allow it,” exclaimed Georgy Casterton, shocked and indignant.

“I don’t know who put her there, but I am almost sure she *is* there, Miss,” said Hannah, hastening away.

Georgy hesitated a moment; and then, seeing no one about, she ran lightly down the passage, saying to herself—“I don’t care! They can’t put *me* here, for breaking the rules, now. I’m going home, thank goodness!”

She turned the handle of the lock, opened the door, and entered the Punishment-room. My readers must not suppose that this was a dark dungeon. It was nothing of the sort. It was a small, quiet room, that overlooked the green meadow by the side of the house, where Miss Travers’ three cows were always to be seen, grazing peacefully; and where there was nothing else to be seen but the blue sky and the birds that sometimes flew across the window. It was called the Punishment-room, because when any of the young ladies of the establishment were guilty of misconduct which the governess thought a little solitude and quiet reflection, or merely temporary separation from her

companions would be likely to cure, or, at least, to help to cure, the delinquent was shut up in it for a time. Miss Travers did not often find it necessary to have recourse to severer measures. It was surprising what a good effect was produced upon an ill-tempered, idle, or disobedient little girl (or great girl) by spending a day, or half a day, alone, in a light, airy, cheerful, quiet room. Nobody liked to be sent into the Punishment-room, because it was considered a disgrace; but those who were shut up there generally came out all the better for it. There was nothing in this little room but a table and two chairs—a bookcase with a few books in it—and a drawer underneath, in which was always kept some easy sort of plain needlework;—generally clothes for poor children. Miss Travers believed that if the naughty girl chose to occupy some of her solitary hours with reading or sewing, the naughtiness might the sooner pass off.

When Georgy entered the room on the present occasion, she found Arbell standing by the window looking at the three cows. She scarcely turned when she heard the door open, and until Georgy's arms were round her neck, she did not know that it was her friend. Georgy saw that she had been crying, and kissed her affectionately. "What is the matter, dear Arbell? Who put you here?" she asked soothingly.

Little Arbell smiled. "Oh! nobody *put* me here—I came here of my own accord."

"What a strange little creature you are!—Here have I been hunting everywhere for you, all over the house. I never should have thought of looking here, if it had not been for Hannah. And pray, Miss Arbell, may I ask what made you come here

of your own accord? Was it because it is the only place in the house where you are out of the noise of the school-room?"

Arbell nodded.

"Why don't you speak?"

Arbell burst into tears. It was not the first time that morning, though no one had seen her cry: Arbell was not one of those girls who can cry for anything or for nothing.

Poor Georgy! Even her great joy in going home, was forgotten at the sight of her friend's distress: she forgot that her papa was waiting in the drawing-room, and that the carriage was at the door to take her to their beautiful home at Richmond. She stooped down to whisper to Arbell—for Georgy was a tall girl of thirteen, and Arbell was very little for that age—with her arm thrown affectionately round her, she whispered—

"Arbell, dear, why are you so unhappy? Is it because you are obliged to be here all the holidays? Because you have no home to go to?—Ah! I feel for you, indeed I do. I did *so* want you to spend the holidays with me; and I wrote to papa about it, but he never answered my letter. It has made me quite miserable: I can't bear to think of all the pleasures and the kindness I am going to have in the holidays, while you are to be shut up in this disagreeable house, with Miss Travers. Arbell, dear! I love you so much," and then Georgy began to cry, too; and the two friends sobbed aloud in each other's arms. Arbell recovered herself first; and then she began to give comfort to Georgy.

"Don't be unhappy about me, dear," she said, in her pleasant, soft voice—which Georgy always thought sweeter than the song of any bird;—

"don't be unhappy about me : certainly, I did feel a little, when I saw the Mertons and the Farringdons go away, just now, with their parents. They all looked so very, very happy. When Mrs. Merton kissed Fanny and Grace, I could not help thinking how different it was with me. I have no mamma to come and fetch me from school ! No mamma to kiss me ! No home to go to ! Then, when I saw the beautiful carriage drive up with your papa in it ; and saw him jump out and take you in his arms, and you kiss him as if you could never kiss him enough ; then I felt some bad feelings in my heart, and the tears coming into my eyes ; and so I slipt away from the school-room and came here, as the best place for me. The Punishment-room is just what I wanted, for the tears and the bad feelings had to be overcome. I was just getting right, and consoling myself with thinking how much better off I am than many orphans, and how kind Miss Travers is ; and was making up my mind to go and look for you and bid you 'good bye' cheerfully, when you came in and pulled down all my good resolutions by pitying me.—Come ! you must not pity me, nor cry for me. I can't bear it, you see. I'm such a stupid little thing."

"Don't call yourself *stupid* because you have a great deal of feeling," said Georgy. "I wish I could do something more than pity you and cry for you."

"So you can, dear," replied Arbell, with animation. "You can *love* me."

"Why I can't *help* doing that," said Georgy, smiling through her tears. "Though I often wonder that I do. You are such a queer little creature.—Hark ! that's some one calling me !—I must not

keep papa waiting any longer." And she embraced little Arbell once more.

"Coming, Hannah, coming!" she cried, and opened the door. The two girls walked out slowly, arm in arm; while Hannah looked after them and laughed to herself as she said—

"Well! well! things are topsy-turvied on a breaking-up day; but this is the first time I ever saw young ladies walking in and out of the Punishment-room just as they please! And it's the first time I ever saw little Miss Arbell cry when the others went home. Poor child! I must comfort her presently."

"Good bye, Georgy, dear. Write to me in the holidays."

"That I will. But wont you come to the drawing-room with me, and see papa?"

"No, thank you, Georgy. I am better here in the school-room. I can help some of them to get ready, you know!"

"Very well. Perhaps it is best. I'm sure if I were you I should hate to see all the papas and mammas in the drawing-room. So once more, 'good bye,' and don't be too sure that you will spend all your holidays here;" and Georgy Caster-ton parted from Arbell at the door of the school-room and ran to rejoin her papa; and Arbell entered the noisy school-room, and went to the window to watch for the carriage and to see the last of Georgy and her papa.

When they were out of sight, she turned round and began to busy herself in helping one of the little girls who had no elder sister at school, and who was much troubled about the packing of a new wax doll among her story-books and battledores.

Arbell was very clever with her hands; and, we may as well add, with her head too; so she soon overcame the difficulty, and the pretty doll's face and arms were secured from all damage.

"Thank you, oh, thank you, Arbell! How nicely you do everything!" said the grateful little Mary. "Now they may come and fetch me as soon as they like. I shall be quite ready."

"But you have got your bonnet and pelisse to put on. Run and fetch them, and I will help you."

While they were being put on, little Mary Bennett had an infinity of things to say, "Isn't it nice to go home for the holidays? Oh! I forgot; you don't go home. Have you no home at all, Arbell?" And the little thing paused a moment in her glee to stroke Arbell's cheek, and think what a sad thing it is to have no home. But in a moment or two she broke out again. "My mamma is the kindest, dearest mamma in the world. We are all so fond of her. My sisters and brothers are all a great deal older than I am—they are so kind to me. The day I go home from school is always a grand treat; and I am, oh! so happy! This time, too, you know, it will be better than ever, for we have got a new baby. A little darling brother! Only think, Arbell, how nice it is to have a little, dear little, tiddy little baby to nurse!" And little Mary seized Arbell's face between her two hands, and looked into her eyes—"You don't look so glad, Arbell!"

"Don't I, dear?—I am very glad that there is a baby for you to nurse at home."

"Miss Arbell!" cried one of the teachers, "don't stand there playing with Mary Bennett, all day.

As you have nothing to do for yourself, come and help me to pack this box."

Arbell started, as if she were not used to the sharp speaking of Miss Steel, the music teacher, and, for a moment, there was an angry look on her face; but it passed away, and she kissed the child and went to Miss Steel.

She had to pass a table where Mrs. Vernon, the head-teacher, was at work, mending some garments for Miss Steel.

Mrs. Vernon smiled kindly on Arbell as she passed, and said, "Come to me, my dear, when you have done what you can for Miss Steel."

Mrs. Vernon was fond of Arbell; and she, on her part, had a profound reverence for Mrs. Vernon, whom she loved as much as she loved Georgy Casterton, though in a different way; and quite as much as she loved Miss Travers, in every way. Mrs. Vernon was uniformly kind and gentle to all the girls; but she was especially kind and gentle to Arbell. Perhaps this was because she had lost an only daughter, who, if she had lived, would have been about her age; and also because she had a strong pity in her heart for the motherless and fatherless child, thrown among strangers for a home and an education. Mrs. Vernon took great pains with Arbell's lessons, and watched her general conduct very narrowly; and although she worked the harder, and was the more frequently reproved on this account, yet Arbell felt that Mrs. Vernon's "strictness" with her came from love, and therefore she could never find it in her heart to echo Georgy Casterton's frequent wish that "Mrs. Vernon would leave off scolding and sermonising that poor little Arbell." Sometimes, indeed, when

she was wanted to play, or to read a story aloud, and had not quite finished preparing her lessons, she felt sorely tempted to do as Georgy and many others did, *i.e.*, trust to her good luck to stumble through them on the morrow. But it generally happened that Georgy or some one would say on these occasions—

“Oh ! never mind Mrs. Vernon ! Give her something to scold you for this time, Arbell, for she’s sure to find fault with you, whether you deserve it or whether you don’t.”

Whenever Arbell heard anything of that kind, it was the best help possible to her in doing the duty she was urged to neglect. A sense of their injustice to Mrs. Vernon generally made her a little angry with her school-fellows. “Never mind Mrs. Vernon ! Indeed I *shall* mind Mrs. Vernon ! She never scolds anybody without a cause, and therefore I am very sorry when she scolds me. Now, if you, any of you, begin to scold me for not putting away my books, to please you, it wont make me at all sorry.”

“Well, you need not be cross, Arbell.”

“Perhaps not ; but I can’t help it, Georgy, when *you* speak ill of Mrs. Vernon ; I don’t mind the others so much ; but *you* know how kind she really is.”

And the baffled idlers and tempters generally withdrew, saying to each other, “what a queer little creature that Arbell is. She gets into a passion the moment you say anything she don’t like.”

There was some truth in that last observation, I am sorry to say. Arbell had faults like other girls; and among these faults was a certain irritability of

temper wherever her deepest feelings were concerned. Mrs. Vernon often told her that unless she learned to control this fault while she was young, it would control her when she became a woman, and make her unamiable to others and unhappy in herself. During the month before the present breaking-up of the school, Arbell had taken great pains to cure herself of this fault. Mrs. Vernon had noticed the efforts she made, and they had had several conversations about the best way of managing one's temper. These conversations always did Arbell good. She learned a great deal from them, because Mrs. Vernon had always some interesting stories to tell about temper; and seemed to know exactly where *her* difficulty lay, and entered kindly into all her little plans for self-improvement, or reminded her of them if she forgot them. She felt, also, how much honour Mrs. Vernon did her, by talking so familiarly and kindly out of school-hours; and, above all, little Arbell was affectionate; she was therefore keenly sensible that Mrs. Vernon loved her, and she knew that all this kind talking, or "sermonising," as Georgy called it, was but a stronger proof of love. It was natural that little Arbell should be wiser than the other girls about such things. She had been made to feel sorrow, and to think, very early—when Hannah used to talk to her about her dead mamma; and this made her understand what is real kindness and what is not—this made her grateful to Mrs. Vernon.

When Arbell saw Mrs. Vernon's smile, and heard her say, "Come to me, my dear, when you have done what you can for Miss Steel"—she knew in a moment that Mrs. Vernon had seen the little

struggle with her temper which she had had before she obeyed Miss Steel's sharp summons. Arbell was pleased with herself—she had conquered bad feelings two or three times that morning; so she stopped to kiss Mrs. Vernon, and to say, "I will come as soon as ever I can. I wish she did not want me. May I go and tell her *you* want me?"

"No, my dear Arbell. That would not be true. I do not want you for anything. I only wish to have you near me. Go and try what you can do to be useful to Miss Steel. That is what *I* am doing now; so it will be helping me. Run directly; for she is very much afraid of being too late for the coach."

With a hearty good-will Arbell did as she was desired. She was so eager and busy in running up and down stairs to fetch things which Miss Steel wanted, that it took her attention, in a great measure, from the continual departures of the girls, so that they were all gone by the time Miss Steel's packing up was drawing to a conclusion, and she had no time to compare their happy fortunes with her own lot, or to be melancholy and discontented about being left with Mrs. Vernon and Miss Travers. She was so active and careful that Miss Steel became quite sweet-tempered, and praised her highly. "Thank you, my dear, I am much obliged to you. You are really the most useful girl in the school. Mrs. Vernon, I do not know what I should have done, if it had not been for Arbell. She has got a head as well as hands; and that is more than I can say for most of the others. Now my boxes are ready, and there is no fear of my being too late for the coach. But I am quite exhausted. I wish there

were any chance of dinner before I go, as I shall certainly get nothing to eat till the evening."

"We don't dine till five o'clock, I know," said Mrs. Vernon. "Where's Arbell?"

"She went out of the room just now," replied the tired Miss Steel, sinking on a chair.

In a moment she returned, carrying a small tray with wine and sandwiches.

"There!" she exclaimed, triumphantly, as she set it on the table beside Miss Steel. "I told Aunt Harriet I *could* carry it! The servants are all very busy, Ma'am, so I went to see what refreshments there were in the drawing-room, and found these. I begged Miss Travers to let me carry them to you, Ma'am, because I knew you expected the coach to call very soon; and if you waited till Hannah or Sarah could bring you a regular luncheon, you might be obliged to go away without having anything. I know you are very tired. There now, I have come away without a wine glass, after all. I will not be a minute;" and the light figure of Arbell disappeared again.

Mrs. Vernon smiled, but said nothing.

Miss Steel said, "Really she is a sweet child. Who would have expected such thoughtful attention from one so young; and such cheerfulness too, from Arbell, on a day like this, when all the others are going home, and she is doomed to a dull life here, for five or six weeks? It would have been natural for her to be very miserable and uncomfortable, full of envy and discontent; for it must be very trying to her, to see that all her companions have friends in the world, and that she has none."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Vernon, "it would have

been *natural* for Arbell to be miserable, envious, and discontented, perhaps; but she has begun to learn the importance of governing our natural evil inclinations, and she finds that she is the happier, as well as the better, for it. It is a trial to her young heart to have no home, and no kindred on earth; but she has already found that she has a Father in heaven who cares for her, and has raised up friends for her; and she looks forward hopefully to making some friends for herself in this world. She has already made many friends, besides her bosom crony, Georgy Casterton," added Mrs. Vernon, smiling.

" You mean to rank yourself among them," replied Miss Steel. I can only say *this*, that I have been so pleased with what I have seen of her to-day, that if it should ever be in my power to do her any service—and I have a great many influential and high friends—you may be sure I will exert myself for her."

Miss Steele was in the habit of boasting that she had high and influential friends, and often promised to exert herself with them in favour of any person who happened to please her. Mrs. Vernon did not attach much importance to this promise, but she thanked Miss Steel for her good wishes for Arbell.

When Miss Steel and her boxes were gone, the house was quite quiet. Miss Travers was busy with her accounts in the Green Parlour; and all the rooms, so lately occupied by the girls, had such a deserted look, that Mrs. Vernon, fearing they might have a depressing effect on little Arbell's mind, took her out for a walk, after giving private orders to Hannah to lock up all the

rooms that were not wanted. She thought it not unlikely that Arbell might wander about among them, and take the young-ladylike pleasure of making herself very miserable by thinking over those circumstances in her lot which no thinking could remedy. Mrs. Vernon thought that was very bad for Arbell's character.

CHAPTER II.

A CLOUD IN THE HOUSE.

"If anger proceed from a great cause, it turns to fury; if from a small cause, it is peevishness; and so it is always terrible or ridiculous."—**JEREMY TAYLOR.**

IT was just five o'clock when Mrs. Vernon and Arbell entered Eastgate House after their walk. "Make haste, Arbell," said the former, as they ran up-stairs, "I am afraid we shall keep Miss Travers waiting. I wish we had been more punctual."

"Oh! but she wont be angry, I dare say, when you tell her about the old gentleman. We could not help being late, could we, now? Besides, it's breaking-up day, and we don't have everything in exact order then, you know."—"Oh, dear, I hope Aunt Harriet wont be cross," she added to herself as she hastened to brush her hair and change her dress. Both Mrs. Vernon and Arbell seemed to be actuated by some fear of displeasing Miss Travers, for they did their utmost to have their toilette completed before that inexorably punctual bell announced that dinner was on the table.—In vain;—even Mrs. Vernon was five minutes after the bell had ceased before she reached the dining-room, and poor Arbell was ten minutes before she could contrive to make herself presentable. The fear of Miss Travers' displeasure, and something extra-

ordinary that had happened while she was out, seemed to deprive her hands of their usual activity ; and if it had not been for Hannah, it is likely she would have been much longer before she presented herself at dinner. When she entered the room, she saw immediately that Aunt Harriet was seriously displeased, and she expected a severe reproof ; but in that expectation Arbell was wrong ; Miss Travers had already manifested her displeasure to Mrs. Vernon, whom she considered the responsible person in this business, and she was too good a disciplinarian to weaken the authority of her teachers by blaming them before a pupil. So she *said* nothing, but sat very upright and looked at neither of her companions. Very dull and uncomfortable that dinner was. In the first place, the room and the table were uncomfortable for so small a party. The cloth was laid at one end of one of the long tables of the great school dining-room. The other tables had not been removed ; and as they stood there, with the forms on each side of them, all empty of their accustomed guests, Arbell wished very heartily that the girls were all back again. It was no holiday to her to see such “a beggarly account of empty benches.” Then everything was so dreadfully quiet ! How she wished Miss Travers would speak, if it were only to scold ! It would be some relief. She wished Sarah would make a rattle with the plates as she removed them ; but Sarah was evidently afraid of making a noise. Arbell could bear the stillness no longer. She was a bold little thing sometimes ; and so she ventured to let her knife fall suddenly on her plate, on purpose to attract observation. Miss Travers looked at her severely and said, “Arbell ! if you cannot be more quiet at dinner-

time, I must order you to dine by yourself." Upon which, Arbell coloured deeply, and refrained from making any more experiments of a similar kind. Mrs. Vernon she dared not look at, for fear she should laugh. Arbell felt much more inclination to laugh than to cry, and yet she was far from being pleased or merry. She wanted very much to tell Miss Travers what had happened during their walk; but she saw that it was not a good time to speak to her then; and from what she knew of the continuance of that lady's fits of displeasure, she feared that no good time for speaking to her would occur that night. When the cloth was removed, Mrs. Vernon spoke for the first time, and Arbell blessed her for what she said. It was simply this—

"Arbell, you had better go to the music-room, and practise for an hour." She rose gladly, and left the room.

What a relief to the poor girl, to escape from the horrible restraint of that presence.

"Oh! Aunty! Aunty!" she thought, as she went bounding along the passage, as soon as she was out of hearing, "I would not be you for ten thousand pounds! What a pity it is that you get so cross! How I wish I could love you as I used to do! But indeed I can't: you are very kind to us all sometimes; and Mrs. Vernon says that you are a true friend to me; but how can I love you when I see that you make so many people miserable, that you can so easily make happy? I don't think I would live with you if I could help it. I don't think anybody would live with ill-tempered people if they could help it. Ill-temper is worse than anything in this world, I do believe!"

By the time Arbell got to the music-room, however, she began to forget Miss Travers' ill-temper; and taking a little card out of her pocket, she studied it intently. It was a gentleman's card, and on it was printed, in old English characters, this name—"The Rev. Stuart Casterton;" and down in the left-hand corner was written, what Arbell justly supposed to be the name of the place where he lived—"Blacktarn Fell, Westmoreland."

Arbell wondered what sort of a place that could be. She was very curious about new places, and had a strong desire to travel. Before she began to practise, she looked in the large map of England and Wales, that hung in the school-room, for Blacktarn Fell. She found, all over the county of Westmoreland, a great many places with the word *Fell* added to them; and she also found, in that county, several places beginning with *Black*; but she searched in vain for *Blacktarn Fell*, and came to the conclusion that it must be a village, or too insignificant a town to be set down on the map. She sat down to the piano with her mind full of Mr. Stuart Casterton and the strange circumstances which had attended their meeting. But as Mrs. Vernon is about to detail these circumstances to Miss Travers, we will leave Arbell to practise scales by herself, and rejoin those two ladies.

CHAPTER III.

MISS TRAVERS AND MRS. VERNON.

As soon as they were left alone, Mrs. Vernon said to Miss Travers, in a mild, cheerful voice—

“Let us go up stairs to the Green Parlour—this great empty room makes one feel quite dull.”

Miss Travers gave one keen glance at Mrs. Vernon, as much as to say, “Are you, really, so little affected by my displeasure that you can speak in that tone?” But there was something in the expression of Mrs. Vernon’s face which softened the harsh spirit within, and made her a little ashamed of having indulged it. Miss Travers had more good sense than most ill-tempered people. Bad temper is almost always the accompaniment of deficient common-sense. Common-sense sees, at once, the uselessness and the utter absurdity of giving way to peevishness or passion. You may, I think, take this as a general rule, that sensible people—people of clear perception and good judgment—are never ill-tempered. I do not mean to say that they are never angry or disturbed; it would be an angel, and not a human being, who could go through life without some variations of temper. But they are never really *ill-tempered*—*i.e.*, they do not allow themselves to *give way* to evil humours, either alone or in the presence of others. They strive to root out—not merely to suppress

them, *which* often does great harm—and to prevent others from being made uncomfortable by them. This is the duty of every man, woman, and child. Young children may sometimes be excused for a fit of ill-temper, because they have not sense enough to know the folly and wickedness of it; but as they grow older, and their judgment ripens, they can have little excuse for such disgraceful indulgence, provided that they have had the advantages of good moral and intellectual training. I do not think it necessary to say very much on this subject, because all my readers must feel strongly about it. Do they not all know, by experience, that good-temper is one of the greatest blessings, and ill-temper one of the greatest misfortunes of life? Good-tempered persons are happy themselves, and cause much happiness to others; whereas ill-tempered people are a torment to themselves, and to all those who are so unfortunate as to be obliged to live with them. I am of Arbell's opinion—that people would not live with an ill-tempered man or woman if they could help it—neither relations, nor friends, nor acquaintances, nor servants—there is something so very hateful and painful in being a witness and a victim of passion, peevishness, moody discontent, or sullenness. Yet some very good and amiable people cannot help this. Many circumstances, and often a strong sense of duty, will induce them to live with a person whose temper is a frequent source of discomfort to a whole household. This was the case with Mrs. Vernon. She and Miss Travers had known each other all their lives; and Miss Travers had scarcely any friend left in the world but Mrs. Vernon. Miss Travers, like many a person whose temper

has been spoiled by early bad management, or misfortunes of life, had a kind and generous heart, and was strongly attached to her friends, even while she was annoying them with her little fits of bad-temper. She was always active in doing a kindness to anybody in distress. Ten years ago, when she heard that her old friend, Mrs. Vernon, had lost her only daughter and her husband by a sudden illness, and that she was left without any fortune, Miss Travers set off, alone, on a journey of a hundred miles, to comfort her, and bring her to her own house. Since that time, Mrs. Vernon had always lived at Eastgate House. Several relations had offered her a home in their houses; but she had hitherto refused all such invitations. Miss Travers' kindness, and generous treatment during the period of her heavy affliction, when she nursed and tended her herself with the utmost gentleness and care, had produced a lasting feeling of gratitude in Mrs. Vernon's heart. When she had quite recovered her health, she saw that Miss Travers' life would be made much happier if she had some one to live with her who had a real esteem and affection for her. She also saw that by taking the office of teacher in the school, she would secure an independent position, and a sphere of active usefulness for herself. Mrs. Vernon did not desire to mix with the gay world, she had had enough of that; so having made up her mind, she said, one day, to Miss Travers—

"Harriet, I want to speak to you about my plans."

"I can guess what you are going to say, Maria. You are going to live with your cousin, Mrs. Charles Vernon! I expected that. I know, I

could not expect you to remain with *me* always. I am a cross old maid ; and it is not very agreeable to you to live in a school, I understand that," said Miss Travers, hastily. There was certainly as much temper as candour in her speech. Mrs. Vernon was the only person, besides little Arbell, who seemed not to mind Miss Travers' crossness ; and on that account, perhaps, they were both dearer to her than any other persons ; and had the power of soothing her ruffled spirit. Arbell, by her winning playfulness, and Mrs. Vernon, by her sweetness and good sense.

On the occasion to which I now refer, the latter drew her chair near to Miss Travers, took her hand, pressed it affectionately, and said, with a smile—

"No, Harriet, you do not quite understand ! You are a very clever woman, but you have made a mistake this time. I am not going to live with Mrs. Charles Vernon, I am going to live with you, because I see that you would like to have me with you, and because I should like to live with you."

"Is this indeed true, Maria?" asked Miss Travers, with sparkling eyes. "I feared that my uncertain temper must have worn out your patience ; and that you would only be too glad to find a decent excuse to get away.—

"If you stay here, Maria, I do think I shall be a better and happier woman. Your society does me good. If I could only believe that you did not despise me for my strange humours, that they would not make you uncomfortable, I should be delighted."

"Then be delighted, immediately," said Mrs.

Vernon, laughing, "your humours do not make me at all uncomfortable. I don't mind them; and far from despising *you* for them, I am only vexed to think that your fine disposition should be clouded by faults of temper which we both know were fostered by the injudicious treatment of your youth. In *your* place I should have been ten times worse, I am sure. But we will not recur to the past. I tell you honestly, Harriet, I am much pleased with the way in which you manage your school, and turn your own unfortunate experience to good account in the treatment of your pupils. Upon the principle of set a thief to catch a thief, I should say, set a woman who has difficulty in controlling her own temper to—"

"Nay, Maria; that is going too far. You, with your sweet temper, would do more good than I among these girls. Though I never show myself among them except when I am in the best humour, and with all my faculties ready to ward off any sudden attack of displeasure, yet, I cannot help feeling that the consciousness of my fault gives a restraint and a precision to my manner, which is not very alluring to the young mind."

"But you teach with great patience, I have observed."

"Yes. If I had not learned to do *that* I ought not to keep a school. Yes, I am very patient and persevering in the mere business of teaching; and I am fond of teaching."

"And you know so much!" exclaimed Mrs. Vernon, who had a genuine admiration of her friend's intellectual acquirements. "I am afraid you will not find me of much use in the school-room."

"Use! I should not think of such a thing," replied Miss Travers. "I do not ask you to live with me that I may save the salary of a teacher."

"I know you did not," said Mrs. Vernon, without noticing the sharp tone of the last few words; "nor do I intend you to save the salary of a teacher. I wish you to give me one. I offer myself as a regular teacher in the school. On these terms and on no other can I remain in your house. Much as I should like to live with you, my old friend, I cannot forfeit my independence and self-respect. Think over this plan, and you will perceive that it is best so. On these conditions you and I can live together; and I am convinced that, by so doing, we shall increase each other's happiness."

Mrs. Vernon's arrangement was acted upon. It is now more than ten years since she had lived in the capacity of head teacher in Miss Travers' school. Her unambitious and amiable nature had found a large field for action. She was beloved by the young people, and, indeed, by every one in the house. Miss Travers, as she said herself, had become a different creature since Mrs. Vernon came to live with her; and Mrs. Vernon said that this was chiefly owing to her adoption of little Arbell, who arrived soon after. Her fits of ill-temper occurred very seldom, now; and they lasted but a short time. Still, confirmed bad habits are not to be altogether destroyed in middle age; and there were a few little points and some great ones concerning which no one in the establishment liked to contradict or thwart Miss Travers. A martinet punctuality about meal-times was one of these; and therefore was it that both Arbell and Mrs. Vernon regretted their delay in returning to dinner.

They felt, instinctively, that Miss Travers would make herself and them very uncomfortable about it. Mrs. Vernon loved her friend, and, therefore, could not treat her with contempt. She was anxious that Arbell should not see her kind benefactress longer than could be helped while she was under the influence of ill-humour; therefore, she sent her away. And now she turned her attention to getting rid of the ill-humour itself.

"Let us go up stairs to the Green Parlour," she repeated, in reply to Miss Travers' sharp look; and she laid her hand gently on the stiff, perverse arm, which rested on the arm of the chair, and looked almost as rigid. It relaxed at the touch. They rose, and Mrs. Vernon drew the arm within her own, and the two ladies went up stairs.

CHAPTER IV.

NEWS OF ARBELL'S FATHER.

"All that live must die,
Passing through nature to eternity."

SHAKSPEARE.

Miss TRAVERS' private sitting-room—the Green Parlour—was a pleasant little room, as we have already said. In it was a good *pianoforte*, for Miss Travers was fond of music, and especially of Mrs. Vernon's style of playing and singing. Therefore, as Mrs. Vernon was anxious to restore her friend's equanimity, she sat down to the instrument and played several compositions, which she knew would please her. When she had been playing for some time, she turned round and saw that Miss Travers' face wore a placid expression, as she leaned back on the sofa, giving her whole attention to the music.

"Thank you, Maria," she said cheerfully, "you have charmed the evil spirit out of Saul. I am afraid I was rather disagreeable at dinner-time."

"You were. I regretted it, especially because Arbell was overflowing with some news she wished to communicate;—and also, because she saw that you were out of temper.—You know if I live with you, I must call your mental ailments by their right names.—Arbell is now thirteen, and begins to reflect upon character. If she made any reflec-

tion upon yours, just now, it could not be in its favour. You would not like to alienate the affection of that girl."

"Alienate her affection? I love her as if I were her mother. Do you think Arbell?"—and Miss Travers paused and looked much distressed.

"I know she loves you *now*; but I also know that it is difficult for the young to bear with faults of temper in grown persons. Pray, hide yours from her as much as possible. Do not let her see you angry about a trifle. Do not let her lose that confiding love which she now feels. Three or four such experiences of your inconsistent and angry humour will change the nature of her affection. She will fear you more and love and esteem you less."

"God forbid!" exclaimed Miss Travers. "My heart is bound up in that girl. I have tended and cared for her for more than ten years. I have dreaded lest any one should come to claim her and take her from me. You know how I love her, how I wish to make her happy. Can you tell me that she will cease to love me?"

"I only warn you of an evil that might arise.—Do not fear that Arbell will ever forget her duty to you. She has a strong sense of duty. She knows that she owes every blessing in this life, under Providence, to you; and she is deeply grateful."

"Duty and gratitude," exclaimed Miss Travers, somewhat mournfully. "They are good things; but they will not compensate to me for a daughter's love, which I look for from Arbell. I think I deserve love from her."

"Nothing calls forth love, but goodness, and beauty, or amiability of character. If you render people services, you are entitled to their gratitude,

but not to their love : we can only love those whom we find loveable, *i. e.*, amiable. I say all this to *you* very easily, because you know that I love you, and that you have many amiable qualities—qualities that win the heart of a young girl like Arbell : but those foolish fits of temper," she added, smiling, "will destroy the effect of every amiable quality. Pray be more sensible another time ; and do not get angry because two innocent folks are, unavoidably, five minutes too late for dinner. I was very nearly scolding you before Arbell : you would not hear what I had to tell you about the cause of our delay then : and now I will *not* tell you, although you begin to look a little curious. You shall wait till Arbell comes ; and then, when you have let her see that you have laid aside the ogress, and that she can speak without fear of having her head snapped off, ask her to relate what happened while we were out ; and, in the meantime, tell me what you were going to tell me about this child, yesterday, when you received a letter from India."

Miss Travers loved Mrs. Vernon, and was always pleased when she assumed a playful superiority over her. On the present occasion she was anxious to make any amends for her late misconduct. As I have said before, she was a very sensible woman ; and her bad-temper seldom lasted long. Injudicious severity, injudicious indulgence, and bad example in early life, had fostered the natural warmth of her temper. She was far too wise not to know and to deplore this bad habit of being angry about trifles ; but she found it difficult to eradicate. Do not let my readers suppose that she was not a good governess ; on the contrary, she was one of the best I ever knew, because she made so much allow-

ance for the errors and faults of young people, while she used the very best means to cure them, and carefully preserved her temper in the school-room ; always leaving it as soon as she felt herself becoming weary or irritable.

" You say, Maria, that I manage children well ; that I really do cure their faults, instead of merely seeming to do it. It is a much harder thing to cure one's own faults, I can assure you."

" I know it. Do you think *I* have no faults of my own ? We grown people have more, and deeper faults of character to watch over and cure than most children, although we could not make them understand that. Perhaps they would love us more if they knew that we had much the same difficulties to contend with that they have. But do not let us talk any more about faults, just now. Tell me what there was in that letter that concerns Arbell. For the last two days we seem to have had no opportunity of speaking to each other, except about the school matters.

Miss Travers took a letter from her pocket-book. " It is from my friend, Mr. Cole, in Calcutta, who has, you know, been endeavouring to procure tidings of Arbell's father for me. I have never felt quite sure that I was right in not informing him of his wife's death, and that his child was under my charge. Since I have received this letter, my mind is at ease :

" DEAR MISS TRAVERS,—At last I have some definite news to give you concerning Captain George Dudley, of the — Bengal Cavalry. He died last year of a fever brought on by violent passion and intoxication. He had been married many years

ago to a sweet woman whom he ill-treated. She was unable to endure his cruelty and tyranny, and escaped from him with her only child, a little girl, and accompanied only by an English female servant, returned to England. Her relations, it seems, were so angry at this step that they refused to receive her ; and it is reported, here, that Mrs. Dudley died in a lodging near London. No one here who knew Captain Dudley ever heard him speak of his child, and it is generally supposed that she died with her mother. From what you have told me, it is quite clear that your little Arbell is the child in question. You have acted as a mother to her hitherto ; and, now that you have certain information of the death of both her parents, there can, I presume, be no scruples in your mind about the gratification of your own wish with regard to your *protégé*. You can treat her exactly as if she were your own child, and she will be ungrateful, indeed, if she do not strive to make some return for your kindness by her affection and good conduct. If she were a boy it might be different ; but neither her father's nor mother's relations are, I hear, likely to make any inquiries about a little girl ; and until they do, I do not see that you are bound to inquire after them. Depend upon it, little Miss Dudley is better with you than she would be with her own relations ; who, knowing of her existence, have made no efforts to seek her out and take care of her.

“‘ I am, dear Miss Travers,

“‘ Yours very truly,

“‘ HENRY COLE.””

Both the ladies were silent for some moments, when Mrs. Vernon spoke :

"What has made you so anxious to conceal the whole circumstances attending Mrs. Dudley's death, and Arbell's dependence upon you?"

"My desire that the dear child should never have her feelings wounded by thoughtless or ill-natured remarks about her doubtful origin, and the apparent neglect and probable misconduct of her parents. Indifferent people—her school-fellows—the servants, even, might say things in her hearing that would excite pain, and much fruitless uneasiness and speculation."

"Does she know?—Yes, I am sure she does know that *you* support her, for she has said so to me, with a very grateful heart."

"Yes. I was obliged to tell her *that*, because she questioned me on the subject once : I could not tell her a lie. I forbade her to ask me any questions about her father, till I spoke to her on the subject. It is my intention to tell her of his death this evening."

At this moment Arbell came into the room—not in a free, buoyant manner, as usual, but with some restraint, as if she expected to find Aunt Harriet still cross. To her delight she appeared in her most amiable mood.

"Arbell, my dear, come and give me a kiss. We were so busy all the morning, both of us (for I heard how useful *you* were, from half-a-dozen people), that we have scarcely had a moment to look at each other. At dinner I was rather cross, and spoke to no one. I hope, Arbell, you will avoid being cross; you see how disagreeable it makes me."

Arbell's arms were round her neck in a moment, and, after kissing her affectionately, she said :

"Oh! don't say that, pray: I can't bear to hear that from *you*, dear Aunty. I *did* think it myself, though, for a minute, but I forgot it again. I'm sure you have had enough trouble and fatigue to make you cross to-day; and then we all know how particular you are about punctuality; there was quite reason to be cross, dear, I dare say—only it was so provoking that it happened to-day, of all days, because I did so want to tell you all about our adventure, myself; and now, I know, that tiresome Mrs. Vernon" (and she looked with an affectionate smile at her), "I know she has told you all about it, while I was out of the room."

"Indeed she has not," replied Miss Travers. "She has left it all for you to tell. I am quite ready to hear it now."

"Then put your feet upon the sofa, and let me make you comfortable before I begin." And Arbell shook the pillows, and settled Miss Travers' head and shoulders among them to her satisfaction. Then she looked to see if Mrs. Vernon wanted anything; and thinking she would be all the better for a footstool, she ran to fetch one for her; after which she got another, and established herself upon it close to Miss Travers, and began to relate her adventure.

CHAPTER V.

THE OLD GENTLEMAN IN KENSINGTON GARDENS.

“ Such priests as Chaucer sung in fervent lays ;
Such as the heaven-taught skill of Herbert drew,
And tender Goldsmith crowned with deathless praise.”

“ WHEN we first set off to walk,” said little Arbell, “ I felt dull enough ; but by the time we reached Kensington Gardens I got better, and began to look at the things and the people. The Flower-walk and the Promenade were crowded, as usual ; but I soon got tired of looking at the ladies and their fine dresses, and was not at all sorry when Mrs. Vernon turned away from the company, and went across the grass towards the Broad-walk. There were only a very few people there, and none of them very grand. Mrs. Vernon sat down on one of the benches and took out her sketching book, and wanted to give me a lesson ; but I was not in the humour for it, and as it was breaking-up day I thought I might tell her so, and I did too. I told her I liked looking at the water-fowl better, and she let me go by myself to look at them, while she remained within sight, and made a sketch of that ugly old palace.”

“ I did not sketch it for its beauty,” interrupted Mrs. Vernon, “ but for its historic associations. But go on.”

"While I was standing feeding the ducks with some biscuit which I had in my pocket, an old gentleman came up and stood beside me. I liked him the moment I saw him; he had such a nice face, such clear eyes, and such silver hair. I wonder whether you will like him! But you *must*, I am sure. I almost always think like you about people's faces. I guessed he was a clergyman, from his dress, though it was not quite like Dr. Berner's or Mr. Maple's. He had black silk stockings on, and breeches, and a long coat, and a hat with three corners, like the pictures of that dear Dr. Primrose, in the '*Vicar of Wakefield*.' Oh! and he had a thick stick, with a fine gold top to it. He stood very near me, looking across the water, while I was looking at him, and thinking he was just like Dr. Primrose *to look at*, and was wondering whether he was like him in other respects, when he turned round to me. In another moment he began to talk to me about the ducks. At first I was afraid that Mrs. Vernon might not like me to speak to this gentleman, for, you know, we never think of such a thing in school-time as speaking to strangers. I gave him very short answers at first, for I was afraid, and while he was speaking I looked round at Mrs. Vernon. I did not like to run away from him, because that would have been rude; and I did not wish to do so, because there was something so very nice about him. When I saw Mrs. Vernon was putting up her sketch-book, and coming to the place where we were, I was quite comfortable. I was sure she would like him, and talk to him. I wanted to hear him talk, for he did not speak at all like the gentlemen I have seen."

"He comes from the north," explained Mrs.

Vernon to Miss Travers. "He has lived in retirement for many years. He seems remarkably fond of young people. His manners have a charming simplicity and dignity, which one does not see often in gentlemen who live in towns."

Arbell was much struck by his speech, which, though that of a well-educated gentleman, had a strong northern accent.

"I liked it very much," said Arbell. "I mean to try and talk like him."

"I hope you will not," said Miss Travers, laughing. "What an odd fancy! We shall have you talking like a Frenchwoman, or a nigger. But never mind this wonderful old gentleman's pronunciation now. Tell me something that he said."

"He said that he had not seen Kensington Gardens for twenty years, and that they were much altered since then; and he told Mrs. Vernon a story about his meeting George the Third one day, near the Broad-walk, and not knowing that it was the King, he entered into conversation with him, and when he had talked with him more than half-an-hour he found out who he was, by a party of lords and dukes, who came to say that the Queen was waiting; and then the King made him go with them, and presented him to her Majesty. Was not that nice of the old King?"

"Yes; but such stories about him are common enough. I shall go to sleep if you have nothing more interesting to tell."

"Now wake up, and I will say something that must interest you. After Mrs. Vernon and the old gentleman had been talking of old times, and after he had told me a great deal about the habits of the

water-fowl, Mrs. Vernon said, in her usual tone, 'Arbell, I fear we must go.' When he heard her say that, his face changed, and he looked first at her and then at me. 'Oh! What!' he cried. 'Arbell! Arbell! Is your name *Arbell*, little girl? That is an uncommon name. I never knew but one person of that name. So your name is Arbell,' he said again, putting his hand on my shoulder and looking curiously at me,—' *Arabella*, that is. There was a royal lady once of that name, who had a very unfortunate life. Do you know anything about her?'

"The Lady *Arabella Stuart*, do you mean, Sir?" I asked. "Oh yes, I know. Can you tell me anything about Lady *Arabella Stuart*? I am very fond of hearing about her."

"I dare say I could tell you many things about her that you do not know," he replied, "but *you* must tell *me* something first." Then he said to Mrs. Vernon, "if you are obliged to go, Madam, will you allow me to walk with you, at all events, as far as the gate of the Park?" After we had walked a few minutes in silence he said to Mrs. Vernon, "Am I right in supposing that this young lady is a pupil at Miss Travers' establishment?" We were surprised, and said "Yes." "And are you Miss Travers," he said to Mrs. Vernon, and she said "No." "Then," said he, turning to me, and patting me on the shoulder, "I shall be right in my next guess, I am sure. You have a school-fellow named *Georgiana Casterton*."

"I don't know how I looked, but I was very much surprised. He laughed, and said, "I dare say you think I am a conjuror. I have never seen your friend, and I never saw you before; yet I have

come to London, all the way from Westmoreland, on purpose to see you both. As soon as we met just now, something told me that we should be very good friends, though I did not dream of this. Am I right, little Lady Arabella?" And he held out his hand. I felt glad to shake hands with him, and he said, "God bless you, my child. You will see me again soon. Do you know this writing?" he asked, hurriedly, taking a letter from his pocket and showing it to us. It was dear Georgy's writing; I knew it at once, and said so. He did not give us the letter to read, but put it away again, and took out a card case and gave me this card, and told me to give it to you, and say that he hoped to have the pleasure of calling on you soon."

"The Rev. Stuart Casterton, *Blacktarn Fell, Westmoreland*," read Miss Travers, when Arbell gave her the card. "This is really a strange adventure," she said, looking at Mrs. Vernon. "Has Arbell related it correctly?"

"Very well indeed. There is nothing for me to add, but that he is a handsome old gentleman, and bears so strong a resemblance to our Mr. Casterton, that I am almost sure he is his brother."

"Was it not strange that he should guess, at once, that I lived here, and that I was Georgy's friend?"

"That depends entirely upon whether Mrs. Vernon's supposition be true, and upon what was in the letter which he showed you, I fancy," replied Miss Travers, looking pleased at Arbell's animation, and stroking her hair.

"But what could he possibly mean by saying that he had come all the way from Westmoreland, on purpose to see Georgy and me? Do you know anything about it?"

"No, my dear, if I did I would tell you at once. I fear we must wait till your new friend pays us a visit. I think it very likely that he is Georgy Casterton's uncle."

"But Georgy never told me that she had an uncle in Westmoreland. If I had such a nice gentleman for my uncle, I should be always talking about him. I have no uncles, have I?"

"I rather think you have several, my love; but I know nothing about them. Perhaps we may hear something of them some day. In the mean time, Arbell, you must try and be satisfied with me and Mrs. Vernon for relations."

"I love you and Mrs. Vernon better than I shall ever love my own relations," said Arbell. "I only ask out of curiosity. I do not want to know my relations."

"Why not, Arbell?" asked Miss Travers.

"Because they have neglected me." And a dark look came over her face. "If they had any feeling they would come to inquire after me; and to thank you for all your kindness. But now I care nothing about their neglect. I would not care to hear anything about them to-morrow. If they came, I would not wish to see them; and I would never—no, never—go and live with them."

And Arbell drew up her head proudly, and her face became red.

"You must not be angry with these unknown relations, Arbell. Perhaps they do not know where you are," said Miss Travers, stroking the little girl's curls—for Arbell was a *little* girl, though she was thirteen—"besides, if they were to come here and take you away?"

"Take me away!—I *would* not go!—You would

not let any one take me away from you, would you, dear Aunt?—What do you mean?—Is anybody coming to take me away from you and Mrs. Vernon? Something *has* happened, I know, by the look of your face. Oh! what is it?" And Arbell started up from her stool, and threw herself into Miss Travers' arms.

"Do not be alarmed, my child. No one is coming to take you from us. I would not let you go, on any account, unless you wished it yourself, or some one who had a legal authority were to take you from me—and now I have no fear of that, for the only person who had such authority is no more. I have heard lately, my dear child, that your father is dead."

"My father!" exclaimed Arbell. "Dead!—I did not mean *my father*, when I said *relations*.—Dead! My own father!" And she stood upright, and looked very pale. "Where did he die?—In India?—Did he ask to see me?—Did he write to you?—Show me the letter. He did not write? Oh! I am sure he could not have forgotten me. He must have seen me when I was a baby. I do not remember him; but I have always loved him. I could not dislike my own father, you know. If he did not take notice of me, it was because I was so far off. I felt sure that he would come some day and be like a father to me. I thought about him, about his dangerous life, fighting with the army against those fierce Afghans. Did he die in battle?" "No." "How did he die?" "Of a fever." "And his daughter was not there to nurse him. Poor father! I will not blame you any more." Then she stopped for a moment, as if in thought. At length she bent over Miss Travers, and said, "Per-

haps he has behaved ill to you ; not been grateful to you for the care you have taken of me ever since poor mamma died. Not sent money. I never thought about that before. You are not rich. But we do not know ; perhaps he had no money—you would not think about that, because I am your own child now. But do not remember what he has done wrong, for *my* sake. He was my father ; and though I never knew him, it pains me that any one should think ill of him. This is not *foolish* feeling, I am sure."

"No, my dear," said Miss Travers, embracing her affectionately. "It is not foolish feeling. It is a natural, and a right feeling. We are commanded to 'Honour our father and mother,' unconditionally. Nothing is said about our knowing, or not knowing them. Your father was a brave soldier, Arbell, and I know very little else about him." Then, wishing to turn her thoughts, she added, "the dressmaker is coming this evening with some new black frocks for you. It is my wish that you go into mourning for your father."

"How kind you are ! My own mamma could not be kinder. I am, sometimes, very ungrateful to you, I fear." And then Arbell wept once more. "I am naughty ; and, sometimes, when the other girls say things against you, I do not contradict them ; but stand by, and think that they are right. I must have a bad, ungrateful heart. Yet I *do* love you very much."

Miss Travers was much affected.

Mrs. Vernon came forward and spoke, in her usual gentle way, to her favourite.

"Arbell ! you are scarcely a child now. You will soon be a woman ; and then you will under-

stand, perfectly, what you do not now understand about Miss Travers and me, and other grown persons ; and you will then love us better than ever. In the meantime, never encourage your school-fellows to say things against their governess. They are too young to appreciate the conduct and character of grown people. It is a very bad thing for them to find fault with those who are set in authority over them ; it proves that they are ignorant, conceited, and without reverence for their superiors. If you were to encourage them, by your assent, to find fault with Miss Travers, it would prove that you are something worse than ignorant, conceited, and irreverent ; it would prove that you are unkind and ungrateful to the best friend you have in this world. But I do not think you are anything of the kind ; for I know you love her well.

"This has been quite a day of scenes and adventures ; I think we are all somewhat exhausted. Suppose you ring the bell for tea, my dear. Wipe your eyes, and sit down once more. I will play some music that will do you both good." And Mrs. Vernon sat down to the *pianoforte*, and sang, in her sweet expressive voice, that beautiful air from Handel's *Messiah*, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

Miss Travers and Arbell sat together, with their arms round each other, and listened to it."

"How happy I am whenever I hear such music," whispered Arbell, when the song was ended. "It makes me forget every painful thing. I will learn to be a musician, and then I can always comfort *you*."

Arbell went to her bed-room early that night ;

for she wished to think about her father's death. Miss Travers made no objection to her retiring so early, because she guessed the reason of it; and thought it was a very natural and right thing that the death of a parent—even one who was altogether unknown, as Captain Dudley had been—should make a deep and painful impression upon a young and sensitive heart. She did not wish to spare Arbell *every* kind of sorrow. She believed that some sorrow was very good for her to bear; that it would soften her spirit, make her feel her dependence upon God, and teach her to submit to His will in all things. When she looked, late that night, into Arbell's room (the little dressing-room which joined her own—where Hannah *once* slept), Miss Travers found her fast asleep, with a calm, happy expression on her features. “How much she looks now like the little Arbell that came to me ten years ago!” thought the affectionate governess as she kissed her darling.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EXPECTED VISIT, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

“ Oh ! the pleasure that attends
Such flowings in of novel friends.”

THE following day, as Arbell was amusing herself in the empty school-room, trying to catch a blue and brown butterfly, which had flown in at the window and settled itself near the top of one of the book-shelves, she heard a well-known voice calling out, “ Arbell ! Little Arbell !”

“ Here I am, Georgy ! But don’t make a noise ; I have just caught the most beautiful butterfly in the world.” But just as she said the words, the beautiful painted wings fluttered gently, and away flew the insect out at the window, once more. “ Oh ! dear ! How provoking ! I wanted it for dear Aunty’s collection.”

“ Never mind Miss Travers’ collection now ! Are you not surprised to see *me* ? ” asked Georgy.

“ Now I have leisure to think about it,” replied Arbell, “ I ought to be surprised to see you ; but I don’t know that I am. I get accustomed to surprises.”

“ Oh ! then I need not fear to startle you with an invitation to spend the holidays with me, in Westmoreland, and a certain strange uncle of mine, whose acquaintance you made yesterday. Oh ! you

are not quite dead to all astonishment. Mind what you are about up there!" she continued, seeing Arbell move carelessly. As that young lady was skilful with her arms and legs, and not at all timid or awkward, she did not fall down; but Georgy thought most other girls would have fallen down if they had been made to start in such a position. In order to follow the butterfly, Arbell had dragged an infirm table to the wall; on that she had placed a form. Above the form she had placed her play-box, and on the top of that she had clapped a small stool and a great dictionary. Mounted on the top of this singular structure, she was just on a level with her prey.

"Oh! never fear," said Arbell, "I can climb like a cat. See! you could not do this." And she balanced herself lightly on one foot, and spun round several times.

"Well done, Miss Arbell!" said a new voice. This very nearly made her lose her equilibrium. It was the voice of Mr. Stuart Casterton. There he stood at the door of the school-room, with his three-cornered hat in his hand, and his white locks falling to his shoulders, looking more like "The Vicar of Wakefield" than ever; beside him stood Miss Travers and Mrs. Vernon, both laughing.

"What can you find so attractive up there?" asked the latter.

Arbell looked a little confused at being caught in such a position; but she laughed, and said, "I came up here after a butterfly, like that pretty blue one we saw the other day. Indeed, I believe it was the very same. You said Aunt Harriet wanted a specimen of that kind to complete her collection, and so I thought I would catch it for her."

"And she would have caught it, too, but for my sudden coming in," said Georgy. "Let me help you down."

"Thank you, Arbell, for thinking of my collection; but pray do not peril your neck in that way again. Keep your powers of climbing for the mountains and rocks of Westmoreland. I suppose Georgy has told you the news?"

"I have not had time to tell her anything," said Georgy, setting Arbell's frock in order—"go and speak to my uncle," she whispered.

Arbell advanced to Mr. Stuart Casterton, and held out her little hand, while a flush of pleasure came over her cheek.

"I am very glad to see you again, my dear," he said, taking her hand kindly. "I have been having a long talk with this excellent lady about you. She tells me that you are so good a girl, that she is glad to give you any treat in her power. I have come to ask whether you will like to accompany my niece, here, on a visit to my house in Westmoreland. You will want a little time to consider the subject, and to talk it over with your friends. Therefore, I am going, now, to pay another visit in this neighbourhood, and shall leave Miss Georgiana with you while I am gone. When I return for her, you will, I dare say, have made up your mind. Good-bye for the present." And the kind old gentleman shook hands with her once more, and retired with the two ladies. The girls remained in the schoolroom looking at each other. "Oh! Georgy!" exclaimed Arbell, "can it be true? And do Miss Travers and Mrs. Vernon wish me to go?"

"Yes. Mrs. Vernon said that it would be a convenience to them if you were away on a visit this

holidays, because they wished to go to spend a few weeks with an old friend, and they did not like to take you with them, because she is an invalid."

"If my going away for the holidays is a convenience to them, I shall, indeed, be delighted to go. How kind everybody is to me! This dear old gentleman! Is he really your uncle, Georgy? I wish he were mine! But that is a little envious. I can love him and admire him quite as well, without his being my relation. But how is it that you never told me about him? How is it that he said he had never seen you?"

"As you have no relations, my dear," said Georgy, "you are saved all the disagreeable of family quarrels. There is some good in *that*, I can tell you. I think ours must be a very quarrelsome family for them all to have been at enmity with this nice uncle in Westmoreland. But there is no use talking of that now; papa and he always have been friends, however. I don't quite understand how it is that Uncle Stuart came to London just at present; but it was partly from that letter of mine, which I told you about. The letter I wrote to papa, telling him all about you, and what friends we are, and asking his permission to invite you to spend the holidays with me, at Richmond. I told you that papa never answered that letter. I could not understand it at all; for he is always so kind in answering my letters directly, even when they require no answer; and this *did* require an answer more than any letter I ever wrote to him. Well, as we went home yesterday, I asked him about it, and he told me why he had not answered it. It seems that he thought there was something in my letter which would please my Uncle Stuart. He did

not say *what* that was ; only he told me it was *not* the bad spelling.” Here Georgy made a queer face.

Arbell laughed. “I think your bad spelling *is* very funny, though ; *gerl*, girl, for instance. But go on.”

Georgy laughed a little, too, and said, “never mind ! Miss Travers says she has no doubt I shall learn to spell properly, in time ; and I don’t care what you or any one says to the contrary, it is not an easy thing to spell *English* well. The words are not spelt as they are pronounced. I say, too, that *g-e-r-l* does spell *girl* quite as well as *g-i-r-l*. ”

“Very likely,” said Arbell, “only it is not the usual way of spelling it ; and it is the usual way that is the right way in spelling, not the right that is always usual. Well, it was not the bad spelling in the letter that pleased your uncle. Do you know what it was ?”

“I think I do. It was not my spelling the word *girl* wrong, for I don’t believe I did. It was the girl herself, that I wrote about, or her name ; for it seems that Arbell, or Arabella, is my uncle’s favourite name. Perhaps he loved some one with that name, long ago. At all events, papa wrote him a letter, and enclosed mine. Three days after that he got an answer from my uncle, who said a great many kind things about old times to papa, and something about “Arbell,” which I could not understand. At the end, he said he should come to London directly, and hoped to persuade papa to return with him to Westmoreland ; and also that he should very much like to have me and you (‘the new Arbell’ he called you) to go back with them, and spend our holidays at Blacktarn Fell. He

said he had a great many beautiful places, and curious things, in his neighbourhood, which we should be delighted to see ; and that he had a good housekeeper, who would take great care of us in the house, and try to make us comfortable. So we are to go, if *you* like. I don't think I should like to go without you. For, though I like what I have seen of my uncle, yet I am quite a stranger to him, and do not know his ways. Old bachelors have odd ways sometimes ; besides, I am a little afraid of him."

"Afraid of him ! Of that kind, open-hearted, beautiful old man !" exclaimed Arbell ; "and he is your own father's brother. It is an odd thing to see what different ideas we have of the same people. I should never be in the least afraid of any one who looked like Mr. Stuart Casterton."

"Don't you think he looks very learned and clever?"

"Yes. That's the very reason I am not afraid of him. People like *that* are very seldom unkind. They make great allowances for the ignorance of girls like us. And am *I* really to go?"

"Yes, dear. You and I are to go with Uncle Stuart. Papa cannot go. Miss Travers wishes Hannah to go, too ; so you will be quite grand, with your own maid."

Oh ! Georgy ; how happy we shall be. If we had planned a treat for ourselves, we could not have thought of anything better than this. Just think of our being together in a strange part of the country. There are lakes and mountains in Westmoreland, you know. I wonder whether your Uncle Stuart lives near them."

"If I were to tell you half what he told me last

night, you would be mad with joy," said Georgy. "He lives very near one of the most beautiful lakes—Ullswater; and he can see a great number of mountains, all round his house. I don't remember the names of half of them! but Skiddaw is one."

"Skiddaw! Shall I see Skiddaw? Why, Georgy, that is as good as seeing Snowdon, or Ben Lomond. Did he say we should climb a mountain?"

"I climbed the dark brow of the mighty Helvellyn."

"Helvellyn!" said Georgy, catching at the word. "Yes, that was the name of another mountain he mentioned."

"Of course it was," replied Arbell, with all the confidence of complete geographical certainty. "Come here, Georgy, and let me show you them on the map." And Arbell, who knew more of what was set down in maps than any girl in the school, made Georgy follow her as she traced the course of their journey from London to Westmoreland; and then pointed out the different lakes and mountains in and near that county; and tried to impress on Georgy's mind their situation with regard to each other. "Because it will be so nice to know all about *that* when you get there," she said.

"I think it will be much nicer not to trouble my head about it at all," laughed her friend. "I never can understand places on a map. I would rather wait till I get to them. I dare say I shall learn my way about quite as well as you, who know every town, and river, and lake, and mountain before you go. Besides, there are some things Uncle told me of that I care to see more than all the rest. Guess what they are."

Arbell paused a moment, and then said, "I know you want to see

"How the water comes down at Lodore."

"Yes, that I do," replied Georgy, and she repeated some of Southey's lines with great animation—

"Dashing and flashing, and splashing and clashing,
All at once and all o'er, with a mighty uproar;
And this way the water comes down at Lodore."

"That will be something worth seeing and hearing. Don't you think so, Arbell? And best of all, there are some things I long to see more than waterfalls: the most wonderful subterranean caves—stalactite caverns. Ever since I first read about the caverns in the Peak of Derbyshire, and about the Grotto of Anti-Paros, I have longed to see places like them."

"And are these like them, does your uncle say?"

"Yes. He says they are of the same kind; and some are larger and more wonderful than those in Derbyshire. I do not know about Anti-Paros. One, in particular, which has only lately been discovered, and another, that the country people say a giant used to live in."

"How I wish we were there. How soon are we to go?"

Arbell's imagination was very active; and she was just beginning to tell Georgy how she was determined to climb a mountain, and row on a lake, when Mrs. Vernon and Miss Travers came in to fetch the two girls to luncheon in the parlour.

Arbell was far too much excited to eat anything.

She could not sit still, but walked about the room, and asked Miss Travers fifty questions about Westmoreland; while Georgy gave Mrs. Vernon an account of her Uncle Stuart's strange habits.

"He got up," she said, "at five o'clock, and went to bed at nine. He would not dine at six o'clock with papa and mamma, but had his dinner at one. Then he drank no wine at dinner; nothing but water. In the morning, for his breakfast, he ate a basin of the queerest stuff."

"*Porridge*, I suppose," said Mrs. Vernon.

"Yes, porridge. It was made of a thick, coarse oatmeal, which we should not think fit to give to the pigs. He brought some of it with him because, he said, 'he was sure the fine folks in London would have none of that sort of meal.' I should think not, indeed. We people, in London, know better than to eat such stuff."

"Some physicians say, Georgy, that the people in London would be much healthier, would not have pale, thin cheeks, and weak bodies, if they would eat such stuff every day, instead of drinking the other stuff, called tea and coffee. All the people who eat oatmeal-porridge for breakfast and supper, are generally strong, active, and healthy. The Scotch, and the people in the north of England, would not think you very wise for despising porridge. I should not be surprised if you and Arbell come back confirmed porridge-lovers. Most people do who stay a month or two in the north."

Georgy laughed heartily at the idea of becoming a lover of porridge. "Why, I tasted Uncle's the other morning, and I thought it quite disgusting!"

"Oh! you should not use such a word in

speaking of any wholesome food, especially when others like it very much," said Mrs. Vernon. "It is almost as bad as speaking ill of their friends to them."

"Well, I will not say anything more against porridge! But I don't think all the north of England, and all Scotland, together, will bring me to like it. In my case, too, it does not matter, for I am tall enough, and strong enough, and stout enough; but for Arbell, now, it might suit her very well. Arbell! do you hear what we are talking about? Mrs. Vernon thinks that if you eat porridge for breakfast you will grow tall, and rosy, and strong."

"Then I will be very glad to eat it; for there is no fun in being little, and pale, and weak; especially when one's friend happens to be 'a remarkably fine girl of her age,'" replied Arbell, laughing. "You know Miss Steel says that of you. Perhaps she would say that of me if I were to eat porridge. But what is it? I know it is what 'The Three Bears' in the story used to have for breakfast, and that they ate it with a spoon; and that's all I know. Is it broth?"

"It is nothing nearly so nice as broth, I can assure you," said Miss Travers, making a grimace.

"There, I am so glad Miss Travers is on my side. She does not like porridge."

"Hey! What! Who does not like porridge?" asked Uncle Stuart, who was ushered into the room at that moment. "Show me the ill-advised, graceless mortal, who dares avow antipathy to porridge."

"I do not like it, Uncle, and Miss Travers does not like it," said Georgy, not quite certain whether her uncle would be angry or not.

"Not like porridge, niece ! I'm ashamed of you; but you are young and may be cured. As for Miss Travers, I fear that she will never be converted from that error."

"Decidedly not," said Miss Travers. "I like everything else in the north. I love your lakes and streams ; your mountains and fells ; your moors and deserts wild ; your fine woods, and your bare rocks. I love the north country people ; their good sense and simplicity, and their conversation, so full of expressive terms. Their hospitality is a very fine thing. Such breakfasts and such teas you will get there, girls, as are never seen in the south, even in a dream. Such cream, and butter, and eggs, and honey, and tea, and coffee, and ale, and ham, and bacon, and meat pies, and marmalade, and all sorts of preserves, and so many cakes that I can't enumerate them."

"Ho ! ho ! you have enumerated things enough to spoil my digestion by the mere thought of them," said Mr. Stuart Casterton, who was eating some cold beef and bread, with a glass of water, by way of dinner; as he did not find the late hours of modern society agree with his health, which, he said, "was too good to allow him to tamper with it." But, Miss Travers, you have omitted the chief thing in a northern breakfast or supper. The crown and glory of the feast ! To leave out *that* would be like forgetting the black broth in a Spartan dinner—like omitting macaroni in the account of a Neapolitan one—or sauer kraut in a catalogue of German delicacies : to leave out *that*, is like leaving out the birds' nests in a Chinese soup—like neglecting to mention oil when you describe a Spanish or Portuguese feast—and salads

and gravies, when you describe a French one—porter, when you speak of London dinners—potatoes, when you speak of dinners in Connaught. Whale blubber can no more be forgotten among the Esquimaux, or horse-flesh among the Tartars, than the thing you have omitted can be absent from a proper north country breakfast."

"I was coming to that," she said, laughing; "but surely you are a little ashamed of mentioning porridge—plain oatmeal porridge—after such a list of foreign dainties."

"Ashamed of plain oatmeal porridge! Why, let me tell you, porridge is fit food for a king. It's worth all those dainties put together, being much pleasanter to the taste, and a great deal more wholesome. People talk of the good old times, when men in this country lived longer and better than they do now. In those times men ate porridge instead of drinking tea and coffee, and wine, and fifty different things. Do you think Alfred would have been as wise and as brave as he was, if, instead of eating porridge, and a moderate quantity of salt to it, he had drunk half-a-dozen cups of strong green tea, with a pound of sugar to it, every morning, and the same thing again at night, when his chronometer candles burned the supper hour? You know all about the history of King Alfred, niece Georgy, of course? Every little Briton does. You do, too, I can see by your eyes, little Arbell. Come to me, and tell me what those celebrated cakes were made of that his Majesty burned for the old woman."

"Of oatmeal," said Arbell, highly amused at her friend's way of thinking.

"You observe they were none of your absurd,

indigestible, modern compounds in the cake kind. Not pound-cake, or sponge-cake, or wedding-cake, or queen-cake, or ratafia-cake, or tipsy-cake,—but just sober oatmeal-cake. Now, if that old woman made oatmeal-cake, and was a good hand at it—as may be inferred from the fact of her getting into a passion when she saw they were burned by the inattentive youngster: for I suppose you know that it is a fact in natural history that all good cooks are cross, the reason for which I will explain to you presently—if she made oatmeal-cake, and made it well, she must certainly have been in the habit of making oatmeal-porridge, which is a much simpler manufacture than the cake. Depend upon it, she and her goodman and their hired herd only ate oat-cake on gala days, but had porridge every day of the week. Alfred would never have driven the Danes out of England if he and his soldiers had not eaten porridge.”

“But,” said Miss Travers, “how is it that the Danes were beaten out of the country, when they ate oatmeal-porridge, too? You seem to forget that your North-west part of England, where you eat porridge to the present day, is just that part where the Danes settled themselves. You Cumberland and Westmoreland people are all Danes, are you not?”

“To be sure we are.”

“Oh, but,” said Arbell, “when Alfred let the Danes settle there, he obliged them to adopt Saxon habits; so perhaps he made a decree that every Dane who settled in England was to eat porridge for breakfast, as well as to be a Christian.” And she looked archly at Mr. Stuart Casterton.

“That’s not a bad idea for a little school-girl!” he said, laughing.

“Oh, Uncle! we get a few good ideas here, occasionally,” said Georgy. “For instance, I’ve an idea just now, that if people in old times, Danes or Saxons, had known what a nice thing coffee is, they would have got into their ships and have sailed off to conquer Mocha; and then we should have heard no more about oatmeal-porridge at the present time.”

“Nor about the English people,” said Uncle Stuart. “They would have ruined themselves long ago if they had taken to coffee in early times. But I am a crotchety old bachelor, you know, Miss Travers, and perhaps I am teaching things which are contrary to your doctrine.”

“Indeed, no,” she replied, with a smile. “I am glad to hear you say these things. Both Arbell and Georgy are sensible enough to understand *the principle* of your *crotchet*, as you call it. They see that it is the same as my doctrine of ‘serving the body plainly, that the mind may be the more richly fed.’ I believe, with you, that the abundant use of tea and coffee, and other strong stimulants, is not likely to improve this nation, but to make it deteriorate. We all either know, or suspect, that it does much injury to the nervous system of half our acquaintance, and that the other half would be better without such things. Perhaps, as you say, a habit of eating porridge for breakfast would be a great blessing to the nation; though, I confess, that I have been so long used to tea, that I should find great difficulty in giving it up.”

Arbell was listening with much interest, and here she ventured to ask a question.

"But is it not better that people should drink tea and coffee, and such things, as we do now, rather than that they should drink strong beer and wine, as they used to do, and get intoxicated?"

"Undoubtedly it is better than *that*; but these stimulants, tea and coffee, when taken immoderately, have, in time, much the same effect upon the nervous system that intoxicating liquors have. The evil works slowly; but I believe most physicians agree that it *is* an evil," said Miss Travers.

"Of course it is," said Mr. Stuart Casterton. "I hope you do not drink tea, little one?" looking at Arbell.

"No, Sir. Miss Travers says that milk or water is best for me. That I am naturally too excitable. Tea and coffee make me very lively and gay at first; but I cannot sleep, and the next day I am always cross and irritable."

"Then you should never drink either. When you are in Westmoreland you shall try what our porridge is like. It is true old English fare. If you were to eat plenty of that I think you might grow tall and stout, like our Westmoreland and Lancashire girls. They are the handsomest girls in England, too. It's all owing to the mountain air and porridge."

"Then Arbell must drink the mountain air and eat porridge all the time she is at Blacktarn Fell," said Georgy.

"When are we to go?" asked Arbell, looking at Miss Travers.

"I think Mr. Casterton says you must be ready by nine o'clock on Monday morning."

"So soon! How nice!" exclaimed Arbell. "How I wish *you* were going, and Mrs. Vernon."

"Ah! my child, we can never have everything in this world just as we wish it," replied Miss Travers, looking at her affectionately. "I should like to have been with you when you see all these new and beautiful places; but it cannot be. I am a little anxious, too, about trusting you and Georgy by yourselves, with no older lady to look after you; but you, I hope, will be more *careful* than if you were with us all. I shall send Hannah with you as an attendant. Do not give more trouble to Mr. Casterton than you can help, and mind all that Mrs. Braithwaite says."

"Who is Mrs. Braithwaite?" asked Arbell.

"A very important person at Blacktarn, though nobody seems to have heard of her here. She is my housekeeper, Miss Arbell. I venture to say you have never seen anything like her. Miss Travers has been making various inquiries about her, and is quite satisfied that she will take good care of you, and will be kind to your maid."

"Does she make oat cakes, and bake them on the hearth, and set you to mind them, Uncle?" asked Georgy. "You say she looks like a woman of a far off century; that she does what her ancestors used to do."

"Yes, Georgy. Mrs. Braithwaite does not belong to the present generation; but you had better wait till you see her before you ask what she does. I have a great respect for Mrs. Braithwaite. She has lived with me thirty years. She will talk to you about King Alfred, whom she esteems as the wisest man, next to King Solomon, and the most patient man, next to Job."

"Then she will agree with us in one thing," said

Georgy, "for both Arbell and I have chosen King Alfred as our pet hero."

"Mrs. Braithwaite will patronise you both, I dare say, on that very account, and also because you go to *school*. I must inform you that she and a sister used to keep a village school in their youth ; and are, even now, looked upon as *high larned* women. Of their superior attainments you may judge, when I inform you that I once overheard a conversation between Mrs. Braithwaite and a neighbour, concerning some woman whom they both seemed to admire, in which Mrs. Braithwaite said, with a proud, boastful tone, '*Her went to school to we.'*'"

Everybody laughed at this, and Mr. Casterton continued—

"But I can assure you, in spite of her wonderful syntax, Mrs. Braithwaite is an inestimable woman. She is a clever, active, kind-hearted creature ; she takes great care of me and of the house, and keeps us all, master and servants, up to their duty. There is no waste of time, or, indeed, of anything else, where Mrs. Braithwaite is. She has quite a genius for saving, especially in the matter of clothes. It is wonderful to see how long she wears her own gowns. I don't think she has had a new one for twenty years. Like the poet Burns' good housewife, she

"‘Gars th’ auld claes look ‘maist as weel’s the new.’

She is, I believe, the real heroine of that story, mentioned by the author of 'The Doctor,' concerning the renovation of an old petticoat. It displays the promptitude, decision, and thriftiness of her character so well, that I must repeat it :

Mrs. Braithwaite, or if not Mrs. Braithwaite herself, somebody singularly like her, once took a petticoat to the tailor to be repaired—one of the old-fashioned quilted petticoats, such as you girls have never seen, but which your grandmothers, who were once girls like you, used to wear, and which tailors, and not female stitchers, used to make, even when I was a little boy, in our northern regions, which are far behind London in what is called civilization, and certainly in fashion ; Mrs. Braithwaite got down from the horse on which she had ridden into the town of Keswick behind her father—she was a tall, strong girl, and much admired for her good looks in those days. She stepped down the two deep steps into the tailor's shop, with a great bundle in her arms. This she unrolled very expeditiously, and displayed a quilted petticoat, which her mother had worn for fifteen years, and which had now been given to Jenny (that is Mrs. Braithwaite's name), and which Jenny was now going to have converted, by some tailor jugglery, into an entirely new garment. She held it up before the good man and addressed him thus : (here Mr. Stuart Casterton spoke like a Westmoreland peasant woman, and changed his countenance so funnily, that Arbell almost fell off her chair with laughter)—‘ *Here, Talleor ! Tak this petcut. Thoo mun bin' me 't, and thoo mun tap bin me 't ; thoo mun turn me 't rang-sid-a-foor, tapsid bottom, insid oot. Thoo can do 't ; thoo mun do 't ; and thoo mun do 't speedily.*’ As the author of ‘The Doctor’ says, ‘ Neither Wellington nor Bonaparte ever gave their orders with more precision, or with more authoritative conciseness.’ ”

: This little anecdote pleased Miss Travers so much

that Mr. Stuart Casterton told some more amusing stories illustrative of north country habits and manners. His partiality for the north was very strong. He was born in Westmoreland, and, to him, no places that he had ever seen were so beautiful ; and no persons he had ever known were so full of good qualities as those in Westmoreland. He spoke with enthusiastic love of its lakes and mountains, of its villages and people ; and when he rose to go, little Arbell felt that his enthusiasm was infectious, and that she already loved and admired all that he had been talking of.

He saw her bright eyes fixed on him with regret as he shook hands with her.

" Do you think you will like to come and see this new world, or rather *old* world, I have been speaking of ? " he asked, kindly.

" Oh, yes. I wish we were there now ! I wish we could all go ! " Arbell replied.

Miss Travers looked at her affectionately.

Georgy said, " Don't be too sure you will like it all, Arbell. Good bye, Uncle. Papa is to fetch me to-morrow. I have so much to say to Arbell that mamma said I might stop here to-night, if Miss Travers would allow me to do so ; and she will."

" Good bye. I am afraid, Miss Georgy, you will undo all the beautiful and romantic work which I have made in your friend's mind, by talking to her of common everyday things. New frocks and bonnets, and houses and gardens, and well-behaved young ladies and gentlemen. You are very practical, I see, Miss Georgy. But you are a good girl, I am told. Good bye, all of you."

PART III.

ARBELL IN THE NORTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE ARRIVAL AT KENDAL.

"I am afraid they have awak'd
And 'tis not done: the attempt and not the deed
Confounds us."—SHAKSPEARE.

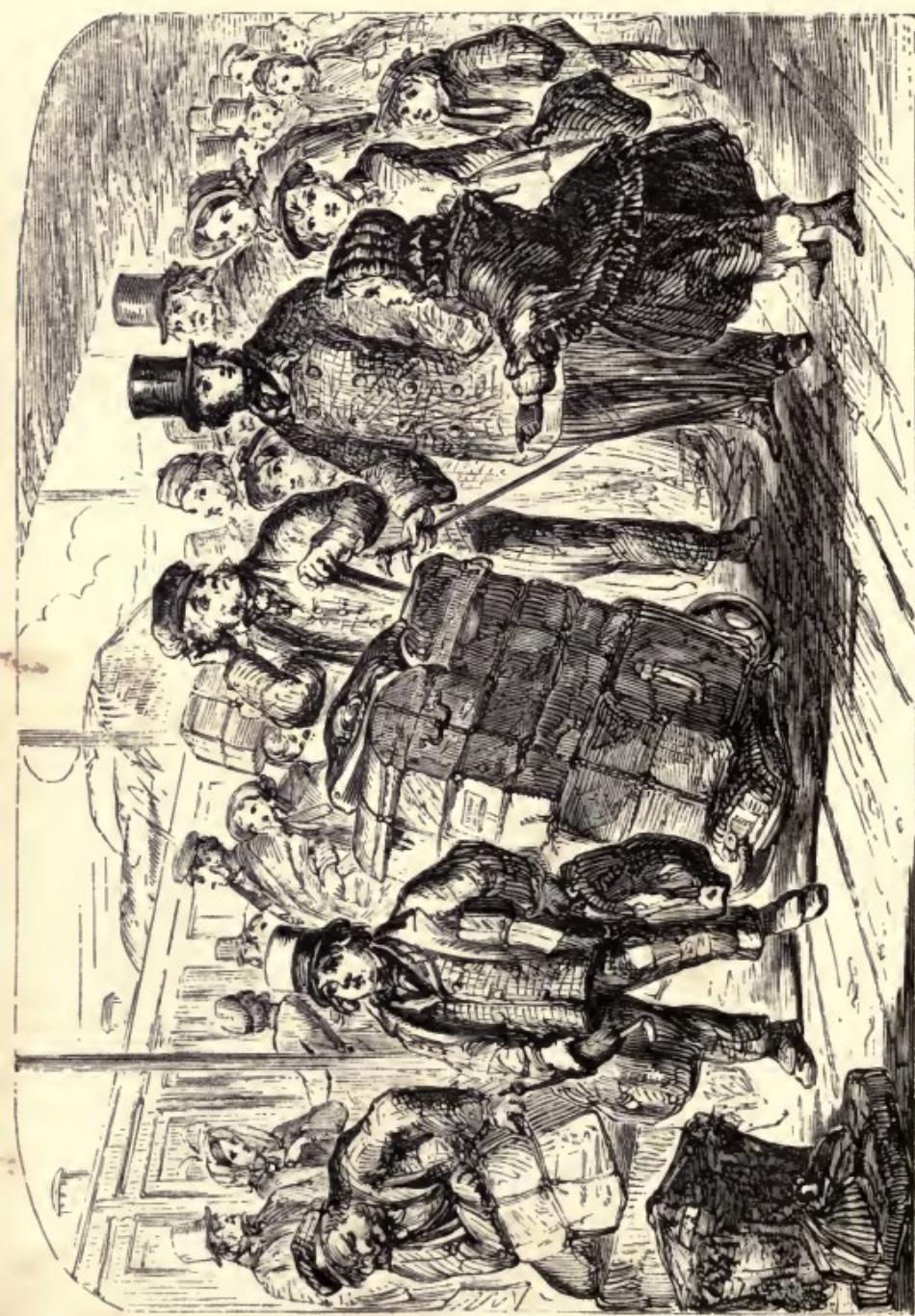
IN these days, a long journey seldom affords much matter that is interesting. We fly along railroads so fast, that there is no time to do more than catch a glimpse of the most interesting places. Little Arbell was by no means pleased with the journey from London to Kendal. After the first hundred miles she was quite tired with the rapid motion of the train, and the noise of the engine, and fell asleep, with her head comfortably propped up against the cushioned side of the carriage. Georgy, on the contrary, who was much stronger, and generally more active than Arbell; who could bear the noise, and the rapid passage of things before her eyes, without fatigue; and who really liked the bustle, and fuss, and confusion of railway travelling, asked the name of every station at which the train stopped, and retained a tolerable recollection of most of the remarkable places they passed. Among these, Lichfield Cathedral, Stafford Castle, and Lancaster Church and Castle, made a distinct impression on her mind; so that she never forgot them afterwards. The two girls, and Hannah

(who rode in the same carriage with them and Mr. Casterton), only alighted twice, to take some slight refreshment, all the way between London and Kendal, a distance of two hundred and sixty miles. Arbell, as I said before, fell asleep before half the journey was performed; and at last, Georgy, who had at first expressed much astonishment at her friend's power of sleeping in such circumstances, finding that her uncle had drawn his travelling cap over his eyes, took Hannah's advice, and leaned back in her seat and went to sleep too. Hannah also took a nap. Thus the whole party was asleep, and very narrowly escaped being carried on to Carlisle or Glasgow, instead of stopping at Kendal.

Arbell was the person who saved them from this trouble, but it was by putting herself in a very awkward predicament. She having had a good long sleep, woke up, quite refreshed, just as the train stopped at some new station. She put her head out at the open window, and saw a platform, half full of people and luggage. She was watching some of the railway porters taking down boxes and portmanteaus, and distributing them among the various groups on the platform, when, among them, she saw a large trunk, in a white wrapper, flung down."

"That is *my* box," she said, half aloud. "I wonder what they are going to do with it!" Then she saw it put upon a truck with a number of others which she knew did not belong to their party, and away it went—wheeled out of her sight in a moment. Although she was not much experienced in railway travelling, she had heard many tales of the loss of boxes and carpet-bags by those who were. It struck her that her box had





been mistaken for that of somebody else, and that unless she bestirred herself quickly, she might never see it again, and the person who had mistaken it for another would be much inconvenienced. Now, not to mention her new frocks (the mourning for her father), there were many things in that trunk she would have been sorry to lose. Without thinking a moment, she turned the handle of the carriage-door, stepped out without waking her companions, and ran away after her trunk. She soon caught sight of the truck on which it was, and stopping the man who was wheeling it along, said, "*That* box is mine," pointing to the one in question. The man looked at her for a moment, as if he did not intend to take notice of what she said; but a gentleman who was walking beside him, and to whose party the rest of the luggage belonged, desired him to stop, and looking for the address of Arbell's box, declared that the "young lady was right, and that the box was not his." It was taken away speedily and thrown on the platform beside her. And away went the gentleman and the porter. Arbell now stood alone in the midst of a crowd of noisy, bustling people. What to do she did not know. She had saved her box, to be sure. But now how was she to save herself from being lost? She could see the train before her, but the carriages appeared all exactly alike. How was she to know which was the one in which her friends were? First, she thought she would push her way among the people, and look in at every carriage till she came to the right one; but, then, what was to be done with her box? That unlucky box! If she left it lying where it was, some industrious porter would be sure to pounce upon it, and carry it off,

she knew not where. Once or twice she tried to stop a porter as he ran past, and asked him to carry this box back to the train ; but they generally ran along without heeding her. She seemed to be in everybody's way ; for every one pushed against her. She sat down on the trunk for a moment, just to think what she ought to do, when, to her great alarm, she heard the whistle of the engine-driver, and saw the train move slowly on. She jumped up, and exclaimed, "Oh ! they have left me behind!"

Several persons looked round as they heard these words, and a lady said to her, "How came you here, my dear?"

Poor Arbell was now quite frightened, and could not speak. She did not begin to cry, but she looked very pale, as she glanced silently into the stranger's face. She could scarcely realize the magnitude of her misfortune. Here was she, left alone,—at a place she did not even know the name of,—at a distance of how many miles from her home she could not tell—without money, and without any friend or acquaintance near to help her. But, as she thought of this, the strange lady bent down kindly to her and asked, "How far were you going?"

"To Kendal, ma'am. I think that was the town we were to stop at."

"That is well," said the lady, smiling—"this station is the Kendal station."

"Is it?" asked Arbell, cheering up—but then recollecting that this circumstance did not make matters much better, she said, "Then they have all gone on, I suppose. They were all fast asleep in the carriage, and did not know the train had

stopped." The lady and her friends stood round Arbell so closely that she could not look along the platform, which was now more than half cleared, or she would have seen Mr. Stuart Casterton walking along hastily, and asking questions of all the railway people.

"Seen a young lady, sir?"

"A little girl, sir?"

"Dressed in black?"

"No, sir."

"Perhaps she's gone into the waiting-room."

"She may have gone on in the train."

"Got out before, did she, sir?"

"Don't know anything about it."

"Seen a little girl in black, sir?"

"Yes, sir. Saw one just now, sitting down on a box."

"Whereabouts?"

"Somewhere about *there*, where them people stands." At this moment Mr. Stuart Casterton was joined by Hannah and Georgy, who came running from an opposite direction, out of breath, and with the tears in their eyes.

"We have not seen anything of her, sir," said Hannah; and then she ran on eagerly to the place where the lost one really was. As soon as she came to the group of people, she called out "Miss Arbell! Miss Arbell!" and to her delight she heard a well-known voice reply, "Here, Hannah, here!" and in another instant the little group opened and discovered Arbell, standing beside her trunk. Hannah caught her in her arms, and could not refrain from kissing her.

"You naughty girl! where have you been?" she asked.

"Oh! there you are at last!" exclaimed Mr. Casterton, much relieved at the sight of her, while Georgy fell to crying heartily.

Arbell was very glad to see them all again, you may be sure; but she was not so much moved as her friend. After the first feeling of terror at being left alone was abated, she recollects that she was not *really* alone; that God would protect her, and would not suffer any serious harm to happen to her. So she soon recovered herself sufficiently to tell the lady who had before spoken so kindly, that she was travelling with Mr. Stuart Casterton, and was going to Blacktarn Fell that night with him. The lady seemed to know the name of Mr. Casterton, and after assuring Arbell that she would send her safely to him, was consulting with a gentleman as to the best means of sending the child to Blacktarn, when Mr. Casterton, Georgy, and Hannah arrived on the scene of action. There was much excitement during the next few minutes, occasioned by the meeting. Hannah talked, and Georgy cried; and Arbell tried to explain to everybody how and why she had left them. Hannah and Georgy scolded her for doing so; and Mr. Casterton said that the *one* thing wrong she had done was in running after the trunk herself, instead of waking him. The strangers around seemed much interested in this little affair; but everybody agreed in thinking that Arbell had acted imprudently and thoughtlessly, in getting out of the carriage by herself, without waking her companions.

"But I did not like to wake you, Sir," she remonstrated. "I thought I could get my box and be back again, without telling anybody. I did not mean to give trouble, indeed;" and now the tears began to enter her eyes. xx

"No, my dear," Mr. Casterton replied, very kindly, "I am sure you did not mean to give trouble; you meant to save trouble. But, the evil was this: that instead of pausing to think what was the best thing to be done, you just did what came into your head first. You acted upon a thoughtless impulse; and so you have given us some trouble and alarm, and yourself too, I dare say. This will be a lesson to you, I am sure. You will try to think before you act another time. I am glad to see that you are helpful, and not foolishly afraid, as some girls are. *That* has saved us the trouble of sending nobody knows where after your trunk, and perhaps even saved its being lost. One should be prompt in action; but not thoughtlessly so. However, as the old proverb says, 'It's an ill-wind that blows nobody good.' If you had not stolen away from us as you did, I verily believe we should have gone on in the carriage to Carlisle. The loud bang of the door, which you had left open, when the guard shut it, before the train started, woke me up; and, seeing that one of my little girls was gone, I opened the door again, and jumped out to look for her. As soon as I was on the platform, I saw where I was; and was just able to get the others out, and the luggage tossed from the van, before the train started. So, if it had not been for your thoughtless conduct, we should none of us have reached home to-night." And he took her hand.

Arbell saw that that was said to comfort her. She knew well enough that if she had acted thoughtfully, and woke either Hannah or Mr. Casterton, her box would have been recovered quite as well; and it would have been found out that they were

at Kendal. Then she remembered how often Miss Travers had cautioned her against acting before she gave herself time to think. Here was another instance in which she had occasioned much trouble to others by it.

They all stood still a little while, that Mr. Casterton might exchange a few words with the lady who had taken so much interest in Arbell. Then they shook hands; and our travellers turned away in charge of Mr. Casterton.

When they reached the waiting-room at the station, Arbell saw that it was nearly eight o'clock. That was the time at which she had heard that Mr. Casterton expected to find his carriage ready to take them to his house. A tall, stout young man, who was dressed partly like a groom, and partly like a clergyman (it was James Braithwaite, Mr. Casterton's coachman, who wore an old coat of his master's), now came up, and took off his hat. He had a cheerful open countenance.

"*Mun I bring t' carriage oop, Sir?*" he asked, looking pleased enough to see his master; and almost as glad to see the strangers he had brought with him. "*We'd a'most gien ye oop, Sir, by this train. I hope ye're wull, Sir, after your fearsome journeyings?*"

"Very well, thank you, James. We *are* rather late; but I don't think that we can go on just directly. We are all half-famished. Don't put the horses in for an hour. We must make our way to the King's Arms, and have something to eat, before we shall be in a fit condition to journey farther. You and Thomas had better take your supper there, too."

So saying, the travellers proceeded to the Inn.

They were shown into an old-fashioned parlour; and Mr. Casterton left them to order dinner, while Hannah remained with the young ladies.

You may be sure that the two girls talked about Arbell's recent adventure. They were still upon that subject when Mr. Casterton came in.

"Well, my dear girls, I suppose you are not disposed to make use of the quarter of an hour which must elapse before our meal is ready, in going to look at anything in the town of Kendal?"

"Oh yes!" exclaimed Arbell. "I am quite ready to go, if Georgy is. I had such a long sleep that I do not feel at all tired."

"I'm not much tired, uncle. Do take us?"

"Come then, my dears."

"May Hannah come, too, Sir?" whispered Arbell. "She would like it so much."

"Certainly, my dear child. Come with us, Hannah," said the kind old gentleman; and they all sallied forth into the street.

After they had walked a little while, Arbell expressed her opinion that Kendal was not half as good a place as she expected to see.

"It is the largest town in Westmoreland, you know, Georgy; and I expected to see some handsome streets; but see how untidy and queer these streets look. All the houses are different shapes and sizes: there are not two alike. There is nothing regular."

"But some places, here and there, look very ancient," said Georgy. "Is it not an old town, uncle?"

"Yes; this town is of great antiquity. It is, as the poet Wordsworth says, and as you and Arbell have discovered between you—

“‘ A straggling burgh, of ancient charter proud,
And dignified by battlements and towers,
Of a stern castle, mouldering on the brow
Of a green hill.’”

“Oh! the ruins of a castle!” exclaimed Arbell.
“Do take us to see it.”

“We shall not have time to go to it, but I can show you it from the town. By the way, I cannot agree with you, Arbell, in your opinion of Kendal. It is certainly irregularly built, but I think it is a pretty town. The houses are built of stone, for the most part, you see; and there are a great many trees, chiefly poplars, in the streets. I think that is more cheerful than the long, regular rows of brick houses, without a tree or shrub to be seen, such as you have in London.”

“No. The streets don’t look, in the least, like London streets. There are very few people in them. It must be very dull if they are always as empty as this,” said Georgy. “I wonder what the people here do all day!”

“I assure you, niece,” said Mr. Casterton, “the Kendal people are by no means idle or dull. They are active and clever enough; though they are not like Londoners. Don’t you know that Kendal is famous for its woollen manufacture? That it has been famous for that ever since the fourteenth century, when some of the Flemish weavers whom King Edward the III. brought over to teach the English how to make better cloth, settled themselves in this town? A poet of Elizabeth’s time, speaking of the river which you see before you, and which is now called the *Kent*, says:—

“‘ Can gives that dale her name where Kendal Town doth stand,
For making of our cloth scarce matched in all the land.’

"*Can* is the same as *Ken*, or *Kent*. There are three bridges over the Kent in the town. But I must take you at once to my favourite place here, viz., the Parish Church. It is a very large and curious church, the like of which I am sure you have not seen."

They proceeded at a quick pace to the church, calling for the clerk on their way. He seemed glad to see Mr. Casterton, and the girls were much amused at his strange appearance, and still stranger pronunciation. I shall not stop to describe the various interesting points in this church, but will merely remark, that it has *five* aisles and three chapels: neither Arbell nor Georgy knew anything of architecture; they were aware that this church is Gothic, and that was all. They were most interested in looking at the monuments, and reading the strange epitaphs. One of these so much amused Hannah, that Arbell learned it by rote, in order that she might write it down for her. Arbell had no difficulty in committing verse to memory. I will repeat this epitaph, as I think it will amuse my readers. It is engraved on a brass plate in the chancel:—

*"Here, under, lieth the body of Mr. Ralph Tirer,
late Vicar of Kendal, Batchler of Divinity, who
died the 4th day of June, Ano Dm., 1627."*

*"London bredd mee; Westminster fedd me;
Cambridge spedd me; My Sister wedd me;
Study taught me; Kendall caught me;
Labour pressed mee; Sicknesse distressed mee;
Death oppressed mee; The Grave possessed mee;
God first gave mee; Christ did save mee;
Earth did crave mee; And heaven would have mee."*



We will now return to the King's Arms Inn. When our little party reached it, they found James Braithwaite on the look-out for them.

"Ye've been a long time, Sir; supper's waiting, and the paraitch 'ell been cauld. Ye must please to be quick, Sir; it'll be eleven o'clock while we get home."

James Braithwaite and his mother were in the habit of looking after their master, in his goings out and comings in. Like many a student, Mr. Casterton was forgetful of the common things of life; and if it had not been for his affectionate domestics, he would often have been sorely inconvenienced by his own absence of mind. He knew this; and, on the present occasion, instead of treating James's admonition as an impertinence, he smiled and took out his watch, "half-past eight, I see. You are quite right to hurry me, James."

"I think so, Sir. We've twenty-one miles of road to go to-night; and ye know, Sir, what sort of road it is. Not quick work for *thae* horses, in broad daylight, and it's turble bad at night, when there's na moon. So ye and the *lile** leddies had best make a short job o' the supper."

"We will, James," said his master, laughing. "But don't let this young woman go without supper. Let her have what she likes, and I dare say that will be tea."

James carried off Hannah to the landlady; and the two girls followed Mr. Casterton, in high spirits, at the prospect of something to eat and drink, for they were both hungry. But pleased as they were with the bountiful supper of milk

* *Lile* means *little*.

and hot cakes, and various meats, they were still more pleased at the idea of the coming journey. A journey in an open carriage, with horses, over a mountain road, with no moon, and probably no houses near, where they could see lights—a journey of twenty-one miles in an unknown country!

When I say *they*, I do not mean that the two girls were equally charmed; for though they both liked the idea of this journey, yet one liked it much better than the other. Georgy, whose attention had been busy, nearly all day, was now somewhat fatigued. She, at no time, was much given to love quiet and solitary places; what she liked was active, stirring scenes, droll adventures, and novelty. But, Arbell was called by her schoolfellows, "*Miss Romance*," because she was fond of stealing away from her merry companions in the garden, to muse and read alone,—because she loved poetry and legends, and was sometimes caught looking at the moon and stars, when she was supposed to be in bed.

It would be difficult to tell, exactly, why Georgy and Arbell loved each other, for in most things they were unlike. I have sometimes thought Miss Travers' notion on this matter was correct; and that their mutual affection had its ground in the fact that they were, both of them, free from self-conceit and selfishness. Thus each admired those qualities in the other which she believed herself to want; and each thought the other superior to herself. Arbell loved Georgy because she was so uniformly good-tempered and cheerful, because she had so much common sense, because, as Mr. Casterton had said, she "was so *practical*." Georgy

was very quick in acquiring most school knowledge, and was the head girl of their class. Arbell, who had a great deal of humility, considered Georgy's talents quite marvellous.

Georgy, on the other hand, was unselfish too ; and being gifted with a somewhat precocious judgment, knew that the humble Arbell, who was often at the bottom of the class, because she did not know her lessons, was, in reality, by far the cleverest girl in the school. *Clererest* was the word she used ; but it was not the correct one. Arbell was not *clever*, as yet ; though there was a probability that she would become so when her mental faculties were more developed. What Georgy meant was, that Arbell had more *mind* than the other girls, including herself ; and, in that, she was right. Georgy admired Arbell's sensitive, poetical nature, and loved to protect it from the rude shocks of the school-room ; in this way she was of essential service in saving Arbell from becoming bad-tempered. Sensitiveness is but another name for nervous irritability, and nervous irritability often excited produces peevishness and passion. Georgy's example, too, was powerfully beneficial to Arbell's temper. It was the rarest thing in the world to see Georgy Casterton at all cross ; and, of all her good qualities, I believe Arbell admired her sweetness of temper the most. Good temper and practical common sense are very valuable qualities ; and as Arbell was humble-minded, she thought that she, with her wayward fancies and occasional fits of crossness, was not good enough to be the friend of Georgy Casterton, and was therefore grateful for her affection and anxious to deserve it. Whether this mutual admiration and self-forgetfulness caused them to love

each other, or whether their love caused them to admire each other, I cannot tell; but it is certain that no school-girl friendship was ever stronger or more enduring than theirs. It was reasonable to hope that it would be so, because it was founded, not in vanity, but in unselfishness. They never praised each other for the sake of being praised in return, as many school-friends do. I think enough has now been said concerning their characters to enable my young readers to judge of the rest by their words and actions.

They have now finished supper at the inn. Mr. Casterton has rung the bell and paid the bill. The carriage is at the door. Hannah is standing in the hall with a heap of shawls and cloaks on her arm, to wrap the girls in when they come down. James Braithwaite grows impatient, and walks up-stairs to hasten them down.

"Indeed, Sir, yo *mun* come down. We'll no be at Harten Fell before eleven o'clock."

The two girls did not know what to make of a servant who ordered his master in this style; but they followed Mr. Casterton, who followed James. In another minute they were all seated inside a roomy, open carriage—Mr. Casterton and Arbell on one side, Georgy and Hannah on the other. James and Thomas sat on the box. The landlord and the landlady came out to see them off. "Drive on," said Mr. Casterton, and away they went.

CHAPTER II.

THE JOURNEY BY NIGHT.

"Know'st thou the land of the mountain and flood,
Where the pine of the forest for ages hath stood?"

IN half an hour they had left the town of Kendal far behind them. On went the carriage, at a rapid pace, along Kentmere, or the valley of the river Kent. And now the wild grandeur of the scenery began to display itself. The two girls gazed from side to side, and uttered exclamations of wondering admiration. For the first time, they beheld mountains—real mountains—rising in successive ranges, one behind another; or interblending, and forming complicated folds of ravines and valleys, into the dark recesses of which the eye could penetrate but a little way on account of the gathering gloom. The sun had just set. At this period of the day mountain scenery appears to great advantage; and it would have argued a great insensibility to the beauties of nature if Arbell and Georgy had remained unmoved.

I do not say that they were capable of appreciating all the glories of the scenery before them,—they were not,—and I will tell you why. A taste for fine scenery does not develope itself naturally in children; it is a taste that requires cultivation. I am speaking, now, of the generality of children.

A child born with a genius for landscape painting, or for descriptive poetry, may show an early love for fine prospects, and be able to enjoy all the beauties of a familiar, or of a novel scene. But it is not so with ordinary children. A taste for fine scenery is not a childish taste; it is one which requires the exercise of intellectual qualities not active in childhood. But Arbell and Georgy were no longer mere *children*; they were entering into the stage of early youth. At this period the taste often forms itself rapidly, in favourable circumstances, because the senses and the mental faculties are fresh and active. Such scenery as they were now passing through was likely to make a vivid impression on them, because it was striking and novel, and because their imagination had been at work on the subject for some time before. Arbell, however, showed a much finer susceptibility to the influence of natural scenery than Georgy; and Mr. Casterton was not at all surprised to find that it was so. He had observed, before, that Georgy was practical, and that Arbell was poetical, by temperament; and he was glad to see that the one endeavoured to lend the other as much of her own character as possible.

Hitherto, in the course of this, to them, eventful day, Georgy had taken the lead; now it was Arbell's turn. She grasped Georgy's hand, in a strange state of commotion—half awe and half ecstasy—while she held Mr. Casterton's arm with her other hand, as she stood up in the carriage, to look round. Then she made her friend stand up too.

“Oh, Georgy! Look! Look!” was all she could say, for every instant, as they advanced, some new

aspect of the scene arrested her attention. Mr. Casterton helped her to understand, and to feel more thoroughly the glories of that entrance into the heart of the mountain country, by his judicious explanations and tasteful comments. He was a profound admirer of the beauties of his native county; and it was a pleasure to him to believe that Arbell would, in time, feel all the wonders of the land. He did not expect her to do so at first, because he knew that she was too young, and because she was quite unaccustomed to this sort of scenery. All beauty of a high kind requires to be studied, to be got by heart, as it were, before we can see the real spirit of it: the more it is known the more it will be loved and admired. When beauty is not of a high kind it often pleases us very much at first; but, as we grow familiar with it, it does not please us so much, and at last it may come to please us not at all. It is just the contrary with the noblest and truest forms of beauty—those that bear about them the marks of greatness, goodness, and wisdom—something which reminds us of infinity and eternity; in other words, those forms of beauty which draw our souls up to think of God. When we look *first* upon *them* it often happens that they do not please us at all—we see no beauty in them; or, if they do please us, and we see beauty in them, it is their lowest and not their highest excellence which we prize; but as we get to know them better we love them more; and when we know them best we begin to find out that we can never know them or admire them enough. The scene now before Arbell's eyes moved her, because it was strange, and yet half familiar: she had seen pictures and read poetic descriptions of mountain

districts, and she had tried to create them in her own imagination. It moved her, also, because she had a natural love for sublime and beautiful forms, which, as yet, was hardly awake within her, but which seemed to stir itself, and become active as she gazed. It was as if a new sense had been suddenly given her. She still stood up, leaning on Mr. Casterton, and grasping Georgy's hand in silence, while the latter sat down again, and was expressing her wish to climb a mountain.

"Oh! uncle, how delightful to climb up one of those high mountains! Difficult, is it? All the more fun, then! And when you are at the top how far one can see! I dare say one can see the sea, and a great many towns and villages."

Arbell wondered how Georgy could think of towns and villages, and the sea, then; of anything else, indeed, but what was around them; but she said nothing. She could not speak. A strong, strange feeling of wonder and mystery seemed to have taken possession of her heart. She understood nothing of what was going on within her; but she felt that what she saw with her eyes was the cause of it. Was she happy? Yes; or if she were not happy, then she loved to feel *so* rather than to be happy. It was something like what she felt when she read beautiful poetry, or when she read of great and virtuous actions in history; it was something like what she felt when the organ sounded powerfully at church, and she longed to be an angel that she might the better sing the praise of God. It was like what she sometimes felt when she thought of all the good she would do when she was a woman. It was a feeling vague and intense, which seemed to swell her heart, and make it

more capable of good, and generous, and unselfish deeds.

"What is the matter, Arbell?" asked Georgy, as her friend sank down again into the corner of the carriage, and she saw that there were tears in her eyes.

"Nothing, only I am so happy! It is all so very beautiful!" And she looked out again, in silence, upon those "everlasting hills," while Hannah watched her face anxiously. Georgy looked out, too, with a half suspicion that Arbell saw a great deal more beauty there than she did, and with a wish also that she could see what Arbell did. So she set herself to look attentively, and in a few minutes she began to find her mind fully occupied by the scene. Whenever they obtained a glimpse into the far distance, the mountains were seen only in outline, and were covered with a grey or dun mist, which made them scarcely distinguishable from clouds to the inexperienced eye. Those nearer, but not close at hand, in what painters call the *middle distance*, were covered with a deep purple hue, tinged along the upper edges with gold, and orange, and red, or, where the snow still lingered on the summit, with *rose colour*. This beautiful variety of colour was produced by the combined effect of the sun rays and the evening mists; for though the sun had set for some time to the travellers in Kentmere, his smile still lingered around the bare and rocky mountain tops that were the first to greet him in the morning, and he beautified them, as the presence of those we love beautifies us human beings, be we ever so plain and rugged in appearance. The outlines of these middle mountains were somewhat exaggerated, and ren-

dered more striking and majestic by the long shadows they cast upon each other. Again, the mountains close at hand, on the roots of which their road lay,—these towered above them,—dark, colourless, and gigantic. Not a house or farm was to be seen for the greater part of their road. The farther they advanced the wilder grew the scenery. The distant mountains became invisible in the increasing gloom ; the brightly coloured ones changed into black and indistinctly marked masses, while those nearest to the road seemed to close in behind and hem them round. The wind blew cold along the valley, and roared in the pine tops as they passed. Georgy drew her shawl around her ; and, saying that it was too gloomy now to see anything, put her head upon Hannah's shoulder to rest. She had been very lively all day ; her usual bed-time had arrived, and she was sleepy. "Good night, Uncle ! Good night, Arbell !" she said. "Your eyes are better than mine if you can see anything at all now ; but if something extraordinary happens, wake me up." Her uncle assured her that nothing extraordinary was at all likely to happen (but in that he was mistaken), and advised her to go to sleep if she could. He then advised Arbell to do the same ; but she said that "she never felt less inclined to sleep."

They went on, now, very slowly. As well as Arbell could see, in the darkness, they were mounting a steep road. She observed that the wind had abated, and that the air was warm and still, as it often is during the summer nights ; but it was very dark. She could scarcely distinguish the faces of Hannah and Georgy, who sat opposite to her and Mr. Casterton ; the two men on the box

looked larger than their natural size, and were by no means as clearly defined against the sky as they had been half an hour before. The sky was black with clouds.

"What time does the moon rise, James?" asked Mr. Casterton.

"Ha' past ten, Sir. I'd like to see her oop afore we get out o' Kentmere."

"What is he afraid of?" whispered Arbell.

"He does not think it will be safe to drive over a certain portion of the Fell in the dark."

"*Fell!* Oh! I remember! That is a great uncultivated hill, covered with short grass, and heath, and gorse."

"Yes; it is a moorland range of hills; but we have *fells* as high as mountains. This very one, Harter Fell, you will find as lofty and extensive as any of the mountains you have yet seen. There is no regular road across the part which we must traverse. It is not very safe driving there in the day-time, except to one who knows the ground well; and, at night-time, even James thinks it dangerous. Was that thunder, James?"

"Yes, Sir. It's been a comin' lang enoof. It's no a lile* touch o' the thunder we'll ha' now; but a grand sturm; thunder and rain, tua."†

The other man here turned to his master, and said, "There's a lile theakt‡ house a mile back, Sir."

"Na! That munna do, lad," replied James. "T' fwoaks is a-bed, Sir," he continued, turning to his master; "but we can get afore t' sturm to t' auld Castle. T' General 's nivver a-bed afore

* *Lile*, little.

† *Tua*, too.

‡ *Theakt*, thatched.

t' night's half o'er. T' servants keeps dreadful late hours, tua. Shall I drive to t' auld Castle, Sir?"

"If there is no other way of avoiding the storm we must do that," replied Mr. Casterton, evidently not without anxiety; and he remained silent, as if in thought.

Arbell said nothing, and cared very little where they went, for she was just in the mood to be pleased with any adventure that turned up. This promised to be one worth telling in her letter, tomorrow, to Miss Travers. "Overtaken by a violent storm on a very dark night—in an open carriage—in the midst of mountains; and far from any human habitations, but a little thatched house a mile behind them, and an old Castle where a General lives!" "Capital!" thought Arbell. "That is as good as an adventure in a book. I've a great mind to wake Georgy, and tell her about it; but perhaps she's too sleepy to enjoy an adventure. I wish people would not go to sleep in romantic circumstances!"

Arbell did not yet know that adventures in real life are often much more extraordinary than any to be found in story books. But she began to learn this truth very soon; for this very adventure which befel her on her first journey by night (since she could remember), was quite as strange as most adventures which people venture to put into works of fiction; at least, into works of fiction which are not fairy tales or romances. The carriage stopped, after they had gone on fast for about five minutes. Thomas got down and opened a gate. In another minute they were rolling over turf, but slowly, as it was up hill.

"I wish Georgy would wake!" thought Arbell. "She would enjoy this. I wonder what sort of place this is!" She strained her eyes in hopes of seeing something in the gloom. Just then a vivid flash of lightning illumined every object for a moment, and in that moment she saw the towers of a castle rearing themselves into the sky, not two hundred yards before the horses' heads. Then came a peal of thunder, which was much louder than any she had ever heard. They seemed to be half way up the side of a mountain, and a valley lay below, with lofty fells on the opposite side. Arbell, in her wildest dreams, had never imagined anything so romantic. Far from being afraid of the storm or the darkness, she only longed for some one to sympathize with her, and to her surprise Georgy was still asleep. At this moment Mr. Casterton put his arm round her kindly. "Don't be frightened, my child. We shall soon be under shelter. We shall be comfortably housed in yonder castle. I did not think you would visit it in this way."

"I'm not at all frightened. I never enjoyed anything so much in my life, Sir. Will you tell me the name of that castle?"

"It is called Glenara Castle. It was once a fine stronghold, but it is now partly in ruins. It belongs to a friend of mine. He is a singular old gentleman, as you will soon see. Take particular notice of him, and tell me how you like him. If he should ask you any questions, do not be alarmed at the sternness of his voice. But, probably, he will not speak to you, or take notice of you, now that he is ill, although when he is well he is fond of children, I dare say. There is nothing to fear."

"Does he live all alone in this castle?" asked Arbell; and while she spoke, another flash of lightning passed over the scene, and was followed by a long reverberation of thunder among the mountains.
"Has he no children?"

"He had a son once, but he quarrelled with him. The son went away to a foreign land, and died there. His father has now no one but servants in the house with him."

Arbell said "she pitied him, and thought it was sad to live alone."

The carriage now stopped at a small gateway in a wall. The rain was descending in a torrent such as is seldom seen excepting in the sudden storms of a mountain district.

Thomas rang a long peal at the bell. It was about three minutes before a man-servant came to open it; then he had to run across the courtyard again, to deliver Mr. Casterton's message to his master. This took about two minutes more, and by the time the servant returned with his "master's compliments, and he begs you will come in directly," every one in the carriage was tolerably wet. Then they had to drive round to a carriage entrance before they could get under cover.

CHAPTER III.

A STRANGE ADVENTURE.

“Our Perdita is found.”—SHAKSPEARE.

“WHERE are we?” cried Georgy. “Is this your house, Uncle?” she added, rubbing her eyes, and gazing with sleepy astonishment all round a huge, lofty hall. It was cheerfully lighted on one side by a blazing mass of pine-wood, which lay on the hearth, and sent a flame and myriads of sparks up the open chimney; the other side was too far off to be illuminated by the flame, and lay in mysterious shadow. Four or five great dogs, that were lying before the fire, got up gravely, and walked to examine the strangers, while two Skye terriers darted forward, and set up a bark. Two or three men, dressed in a sort of compromise costume, half domestic servants, half farm-labourers, approached under pretence of silencing, and driving away the dogs, but, in reality, to see who it was that had invaded the solitude of Glenara at such an hour. The man who had admitted them, and whom Mr. Casterton called Bains, sent two of them to take the carriage to the stables, and desired another, who was neatly dressed in livery, to “conduct Mr. Casterton to the General.”

In a moment the hall was cleared, and the two girls stood with Hannah by the great fire.

Georgy caught hold of Arbell. "Is it a dream? What is it all? Where are we?"

Arbell laughed; and shaking her gently, said, "No, it is not a dream. It is a real adventure. We have been caught in a storm. Feel! your thick shawl is wet through, and my bonnet is like a sponge, and so are my curls. We have stopped here for shelter."

"But where is *here*?" persisted Georgy, allowing Hannah to take off her wet bonnet and wrappers, without moving anything but her head, which she turned first on one side, and then on the other, in torpid wonderment.

"*Here*, is the hall of Glenara Castle; belonging to General somebody, a friend of your Uncle; and as soon as we have taken off these wet things, we are going to see him," said Arbell, while she wrung the rain-drops from her long curls, and set them in order, before the blazing fire. "Do pray wake up, Georgy! You are losing the finest treat in the world. You ought not to have been asleep just now. If you had only seen this old castle, and the mountains all around, when the flashes of lightning came, you would never forget it."

"Oh! I've no taste for wind, and rain, and lightning. Why, really Hannah, my bonnet is wet through. There's my pretty new ribbon quite spoiled! I suppose this is a regular old Castle Hall, such as knights in old times used to feast in. Well, I don't think I should much like this for a dining-room. Is my uncle going to leave us here? Where are the dogs gone? There were some men here just now. Ah, I suppose they were having their supper," she continued, seeing a large table on one side of the fireplace, covered with a cloth, and

plates and dishes. "Ah, porridge! I don't remember reading that barons and knights had nothing but porridge at their great feasts."

Mr. Casterton now returned hastily.

"My dears, have you taken off your wet wrappers?" he asked, and at the same time he looked with some anxiety at Arbell. "I hope you are none the worse for your wetting."

"No, indeed," said she. "I feel all the better for it."

She certainly looked very well. The long, fair hair curled all the better for the wetting it had received. Her cheek looked rosy, and her eye bright with pleasurable excitement. She had thrown aside her cloak and shawl, and stood before the fire in her simple black frock, as delicate a little lady as any of the aristocratic daughters of that ancient castle. Mr. Casterton put his hand upon her head for a moment, then, drawing her arm through his, he called Georgy to come on the other side, and began to lead them towards the upper part of the hall.

"Uncle, where are we going? Tell me something about this castle," said Georgy.

"I will answer all your questions another time. Ask me none now, but keep silent. You will have quite enough to occupy your eyes, and ears, and thoughts, during the short time you are here. This is not Liberty Hall, niece, I can tell you. We must take care how we behave here."

He conducted them through an ill-lighted lobby into a small ante-chamber. The servant in livery, whom Arbell had noticed in the hall, stood here, waiting to throw open the door of a spacious saloon.

It was handsomely furnished, and well lighted; a fire blazed on the hearth. Arbell noticed these circumstances at the first glance; after that, her attention was entirely occupied by two objects—"The General" and a full length portrait which hung on the wall opposite to him. As they entered the room the General half rose from a great high-backed chair by the fire, and in a pompous voice said—

"You will excuse me, young ladies. I am a victim to the gout, and can neither stand nor walk. Turner, place chairs *there*, for the young ladies. Pray be seated." And he waved his hand courteously.

They sat down opposite him; and Mr. Casterton took a seat near.

"What a cross looking old gentleman," thought Georgy. "I hope he wont speak to us."

The General began to press Mr. Casterton to stay all night, in the same pompous tone; but Arbell thought that he really wished them to stay. While she was looking very attentively at him, never thinking that he would condescend to notice her or Georgy again, he suddenly turned his eyes full upon her. They were very fiery and piercing, though he was an old man; and Arbell moved hers away from his face to the fire. Still she felt that he was looking at her; and she longed to jump up and run out of the room; but she was afraid to move a muscle. "If he speaks to me," thought she, "what shall I do?"

"Are you Miss Casterton?" he asked.

Arbell glanced up timidly, and was about to reply, when, to her great relief, Georgy said, without any hesitation—

"I am Georgy Casterton, Sir."

"Oh, you are Mr. Casterton's niece, are you? And what is your name?" he said, again looking at Arbell.

"Arabella Dudley," she replied, in a low voice.

"What!" roared he, half starting from his seat, and striking the table with his fist. "Tell me your real name. Play me no tricks, girl."

Arbell, instead of being afraid, now grew bolder, and looking the fierce old man steadily in the face, she replied in a louder tone than before, though in a respectful manner, "My name is Arabella Dudley, Sir."

A perfect silence followed this reply; during which time the old man's bright blue eyes glanced repeatedly at little Arbell. At the end of that time he uttered, as if to himself, the word "impossible!"

"How old are you?" he asked, in a quieter voice.

"Thirteen years and a half."

"Where were you born?"

"In Calcutta."

"Is your father alive?"

"No."

"When did he die?"

"I do not know; but I wear mourning for him now."

"Where did he die?"

"He died of a fever, in India."

"Come hither to me," said the old General, whose voice had become lower and more full of anxiety at every question. She walked up to him quietly, without showing any fear. Georgy could not have believed that the gentle Arbell was so courageous, if she had not been present. She sat

trembling for her all the time ; full of wonder at this strange old gentleman, who spoke so sharply to Arbell, and seemed to take such an unaccountable interest in her.

Mr. Casterton sat quietly watching the General, and, apparently, was not surprised at his words or his manner. When Arbell stood beside the old man's chair he took her by the arm, rather suddenly, and turned her round, so that she was brought face to face with the picture before mentioned.

"Look at that picture," he said to her.

Arbell obeyed ; and saw that it was the portrait of a young man, not unlike the General himself. He was tall and handsome, and wore a military undress.

"Is that picture like your father?" he asked.

"I do not know," she replied. "I do not remember my father. He was Captain Robert Dudley, of the — Regiment, Bengal Cavalry. He was not kind to my poor mamma ; that is all I know about him."

Thus saying, she wrested her arm from the old gentleman's grasp, and went to Mr. Casterton, as if for protection.

The General's eye followed her ; and then glanced to the benevolent face of Mr. Casterton.

"Stuart : what is the meaning of this ? Who is that child ?" he asked, in a proud imperious manner.

Upon this Mr. Casterton looked at him with a grave, pitying expression, and said, "The meaning of this is, that we have been led, *not* by chance (there is no such thing as chance), but by the hand of Providence, to you this night. I had no inten-

tion of coming hither ; indeed, I wished to avoid bringing this dear child into your presence until it had been proved to you, by others, that she is what you now more than half believe. I know that she is your son's child. But she has not come to you to seek a home. She has met with kind friends, who have been to her what her own kinsfolk should have been ; and from whom she would not willingly be parted."

" Begone !" roared the infuriated old man. " Liars ! Cheats ! Take the girl away ! She is not my son's child. Or if she be, what is that to me ? Have I not disinherited him ? And is he not dead ? Disinherited ! Dead ! and all on account of that wretched woman whom he made his wife."

" Hold ! General Dudley," exclaimed the good clergyman, starting up and taking Arbell's arm. " I will not have this sweet child's mother disrespectfully spoken of before her. She has been taught to honour both father and mother, though she has known neither ; and, remember, it was your own vindictive, wicked will that deprived your son of his inheritance, drove him into exile, and embittered his marriage. It is to you, more than to any one, that this child owes her misfortunes. You need not fear that any attempt will be made to force her upon you. Arabella Dudley need not come to her father's family for a home. God has endowed her with blessings of far more value than the estates which it is in your power to give, or to withhold. Come ! Arbell. Let us go."

" Stay, Stuart, stay !" said the General, who had listened quietly while his friend spoke. " What proof can you give me that this is my granddaughter ? What proof, I mean, except her like-

ness to Robert, which at first drew my attention to her?"

"I have been to London to seek out this child, and have ascertained, beyond a doubt, that she is the daughter of my niece, Arabella, and of your son. It was with a view of introducing her to her nearest relations that I brought her down on a visit to my house. She is going there now. When you choose to seek her out, and to make further inquiries into the truth of my statement, come or send to me. In the meantime, I shall take care to protect her from harsh treatment or unfeeling questions."

So saying, he led the two girls from the room. Not a word was said till they reached an apartment at the further end of the same lobby. Here they found Hannah alone. "The storm is not yet over," he then said. "Arbell, my dear, we must wait here until it subsides. It is dangerous to travel among the mountains in such weather. You behaved well just now. I hoped you would have been spared such a scene this night, when you are fatigued with so long a journey. But there was no other reason for delaying it. You have only been introduced to your grandfather and the home of your ancestors rather more unceremoniously than I intended. The introduction *must* have come, however. Hannah, go to the hall and ask the butler to bring some wine. It will do you all good. Georgy, my dear, you look as frightened as if *you* had turned out to be General Dudley's grand-daughter. You are paler than Arbell."

"Poor dear Arbell!" exclaimed Georgy, throwing her arms round her friend. "Speak to me, Arbell. Don't look so stiff and strange. What is

the matter? You are not to be left with this horrid old grandfather. You are going with us."

"Yes; I know," said Arbell. "I can't talk now. I have so many things to think of all at once. Let me lie down." And she stretched herself on the sofa; and turning her face to the wall, lay without speaking.

When Hannah brought the wine, Mr. Casterton poured some out, and desired Arbell to drink it.

She did so; and then calling Hannah, she whispered, "I am too tired just now to tell you what has happened. Georgy will tell you. God bless you, Hannah. They must not take me away from you and everybody I love. They cannot. They shall not," she said passionately.

"Ah! my child, you are a true Dudley, I see," said Mr. Casterton, smiling sadly. "There, turn round to the wall again, and try to compose yourself, or we shall have you in a fever. That would be a pretty end to our day's adventures."

Arbell turned to the wall, and tried to compose herself in the most effectual manner, by praying that God would send His peace into her heart in all the new and strange circumstances that seemed rising up to disturb the even course of her life. In a little time afterwards she slept. Hannah watched beside her, and Georgy lay on another couch and slept too.

Mr. Casterton left them. He went to comfort his old friend, General Dudley, whose ill-behaviour to himself he readily forgave; and whose happiness he had it in his heart to promote, in spite of his obstinacy and violent temper.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ARRIVAL AT BLACKTARN HOUSE.

“Hail! usages of pristine mould,
And ye that guard them—mountains old!”
WORDSWORTH.

HANNAH heard the castle clock strike midnight, and then she heard a cock crow as if he believed it to be morning. She had been so occupied in thinking over what Georgy had told her concerning her beloved child, as she called Arbell, that the time had gone by unnoticed.

“Could it be two hours since they stopped at this great dismal place?” she asked herself, as she started up. She looked at the two girls, and finding they were still fast asleep, she thought she would go and inquire whether they were really going to pass the night here; for, having a great sense of the value of regularity and propriety, Hannah would have thought it necessary, if that were the case, to seek out bed-rooms, and wake up the two girls, in order to undress them and put them in bed.

“What would my poor mistress say,” she thought, “if she could see those children now? She would think, indeed, that an old gentleman like Mr. Casterton was not a very fit person to take charge of them, and that I ought to have done

something. Oh, dear ! I hope we shall have no more such journeys by night."

She went to the door, and opened it gently. It looked as light as day out in the lobby. "Oh ! the moon is up at last," she said to herself ; "still, as I don't know my way about this great desert of a house, I had better take a candle." So she took a candle, and carefully shutting the door on the two sleepers, proceeded on a voyage of discovery. After opening one or two doors that looked right, but turned out to be wrong, she found herself, at length, in the great Hall. "What an awful cold, dull place!" she thought. "A terrible place for draughts in the winter time : but it's grand-looking, too ! The moon, through that great window, lights it pretty well. What a pretty window, too ! Such fine colours : blue, red, yellow ! There's letters written in the colours, too. Let me see, D—U—D—Oh ! I see—*Dudley*. Ah ! if this rambling old place ever does come to Miss Arbell (and Miss Georgy says it may), we'll see and brush it up a little. But there's time enough to think of that when the old tyrant is dead. Now, how am I to get out to the stables ? Oh ! the great door is not fastened," and she opened it, and stepped out. The moon was shining in the fullest brilliancy over the scene, which even Hannah, unaccustomed as she was to the wild and sublime, paused to examine. As she stood on the steps looking along the valley, James Braithwaite came up to her.

"Well ! I'm a'maist tired of waiting for orders. T' storm's quite over, and t' moon's oop. I'll just bring t' currudge round, and yo'll please to go and tell measter and t' yong leddies as they mun goa."

"Is that the way you speak to your master?" said Hannah, who had been tempted several times before to administer a reproof to James on the impropriety of his manners. "You want a little manners, young man. We don't speak in that way to our masters in London, and thereabouts."

"Noa!" said James, "yo speak like slaves to them afore their faces, and then ahind their backs yo say all manner of evil of them. I know ye Lunnon sarvants; I hoped yo didn't come frae Lunnon. Yo look as tho' yo lued lile Missy yonder, and she lued yo."

"So I do," said Hannah. "I love Miss Arbell as if she was my own flesh, and that makes me so familiar-like with *her*. I ain't so to others."

"Ah! now we've come to it, young 'ooman. *I* love my measter as yo love lile Missy; and that's why I say till him, '*Yo mun do it*,' when he don't know, as well as I know, what's good for him. Now, he don't know about times and seasons, and thae things, and so I'm obliged to look after him, and 'mind him when to go and come; or, bless your heart! he'd get into strange scrapes, I can tell ee. He knows that weel enuf. He's a real sensible gentleman, is measter. He knows when he *don't* know; and so yo see, when I says, '*Measter, yo mun*', he never says, '*Noa, James, I wunna*'. Now, if it hadn't a been for this sturm, we should ha gotten hoam by ha'-past eleven. And, if I hadn't a made him stop here, we should ha' bin washed away by the beck* down there; for it *brast* out over bounds, before we could a passed it. I'm mighty glad we come oop here. It's been a fearsome

* *Beck*, mountain stream.

sturm ; and the lightning's struck a good many times along by where we should have gone. It's worth waiting two hours to save six lives, I'm thinking, thof one do be in a hurry to get hoam. Muthor will say I was a gude lad not to tempt Providence in such a sturm ; and now it's all fair, and I can see whar I'm driving, we'll start off as sune as measter is ready ; and if yo'll go and tell him soa, I'll thank ye."

Thus saying, the great broad-shouldered man, whom his mother called a *lad*, and his master a *child*, strode off.

Hannah looked after him, in mingled wonder at his size, his strange speeches, and his stranger manners.

"Well ! He's the queerest gentleman's servant I ever saw !" she exclaimed.

On turning back into the hall, she recollect ed that she did not know where to find Mr. Casterton. However, Hannah never sat down helplessly because she did not know how to do a thing, as many people do. She set herself about to try to find out. Taking her candle again from the table where she had placed it, she retraced her way to the lobby where the room was in which she had left the young ladies. She had the precaution, too, to take with her their shawls and bonnets, which were still hanging before the now extinguished fire in the hall, and were quite dry. She woke them both with some difficulty. Georgy was quite angry at being awaked, and declared, with much emphasis, and with her eyes fast shut, that "she was not going to get up for anybody. She was too tired. She did not want any breakfast ;" but when Arbell, who awoke more readily, shook her, and said that

the carriage was ready, Georgy started up, and said, "Oh ! are you come to say good-bye, Arbell ? Is the General going to take you away from us all ?"

"Wake up, Georgy. Don't you know we are going on to Blacktarn ? It is nearly morning."

"I should think it was !" said Georgy. "It's the longest night I ever spent ! Oh, dear ! how sleepy I am ! How far have we to go, I wonder."

"Not very far, Miss," said Hannah. "Have you any idea where your uncle is ?"

"Not the least. Unless he is in the great room at the other end of this gallery, with that cross old gentleman."

Hannah went to see ; and while she was gone, Arbell, who was quietly putting on her bonnet and cloak, begged her friend not to say disrespectful things of General Dudley. "I know he is cross and passionate, and a tyrant ; but then he is my grandfather, Georgy ; and, somehow, I do not like to hear such things said of him."

Georgy had not so strong a feeling of reverence for grown persons ; nor was she quite so religious as Arbell ; so that she did not feel at once the impropriety of ridiculing so near a relation in her presence ; but Georgy loved Arbell sincerely, and when Arbell expressed any wish she tried to comply with it, especially if it were in a matter where delicacy of feeling was concerned ; for in those things she generally believed Arbell to be a better judge than herself. On the present occasion she kissed her friend, and said "she hoped that she had not given her pain by what she had said," promising to avoid saying similar things again.

When they were quite ready, Hannah came in ; and, tying on her own bonnet, said, that Mr.

Casterton was waiting in the hall for them, and that the carriage was at the door. The two girls walked quickly, beside Hannah, along the moon-lit lobby—Arbell glancing with a peculiar interest at everything she saw; especially at the door of the room where she had seen her grandfather. The thought in her mind was: “And did my father run along this gallery and sit on these chairs when he was a boy?”

“Come, my poor, dear children,” said Mr. Casterton, advancing to them as soon as they came in sight. “This is a terrible state of affairs. Out of bed at half-past twelve o’clock! and going to take a drive at such a time, too! What would Miss Travers say to such a thing? What would mamma say, Georgy?”

“Why, it’s not more than London people do every night. It’s not the first time that I have been up at half-past twelve, and taken a drive, too; but then it was in the Christmas holidays, when we came home from the theatre.”

“And don’t you think this far more interesting? You are acting a part in a real play yourself. I’m sure, at all events, you have seen nothing on the stage nearly so beautiful as this;” and he threw open the door, and displayed the magnificent prospect lighted by moonlight.

They both gazed on it with admiration. It seemed to animate the silent Arbell.

“This, then, was the scenery my father had always before his eyes when he was a boy! How could he grow up ungentle—cruel to my poor mother?” she thought.

Two servants, belonging to Glenara Castle, led

the horses over some rough ground, by which they could get sooner into the road, and, at the same time, avoid the *beck*, which had burst bounds and inundated a portion of it. At length the horses were safely on the road, and then Mr. Casterton wished the two men "good night," and calling one of them to him, bade him ride over to Blacktarn in the morning, if he could spare the time, as he wished to hear how the General was.

Mr. Casterton, drawing Arbell to him, affectionately, said to her, in a low voice, "My child, I have been pleased with your conduct in the trying circumstances which have occurred to-night. Will you try as much as possible not to let them agitate you? There is nothing to fear. I have reason to think that this unexpected introduction to your grandfather will turn out a good thing for you both. But we will talk of this more to-morrow, when we are alone."

"I am afraid my head aches too much and I am too sleepy to understand anything very clearly. I seem as if it were a year since yesterday. I am so tired that I can't care about anything—not even Harter Fell and Blacktarn. And yet when I shut my eyes, I see my grandfather's fiery looks and hear his angry voice. I can't forget *them*; they prevent me from going to sleep."

"Put your head on my shoulder and try to go to sleep now," said Mr. Casterton. Arbell did so gladly, for she was much exhausted; and in a few moments she fell into a profound sleep. Georgy followed her example; and when the carriage stopped at the house, which they had so longed to see, they were both so soundly asleep that Mr.

Casterton lifted them out and carried them up to their respective bed-rooms, and laid them on their beds without waking them. Hannah was too tired to take any notice of the house or of the important Mrs. Braithwaite. She had just strength enough to assist that dame in undressing the two girls and putting them into bed; and to say "Thank you" for the service, and then she threw herself on the bed prepared for her and slept as she had never slept since the sad night on which Mrs. Dudley died.

Mrs. Braithwaite, who had prepared a nice meal for the belated travellers, was a little vexed to find that they were too tired to partake of it; but when she saw the state of exhaustion in which they all were, she said nothing about it; and, when they were all comfortably in bed, she joined her son in the kitchen, and invited him to partake of the aforesaid meal. James was by no means averse to this proposal, and fetched Thomas from the stable to join them. You may be sure no incident of their journey from Kendal was forgotten; and each of the men had plenty to tell about the two "*lile leddies*," and the young ooman. They were both favourably impressed by their visitors; and James prophesied that his mother "would like *lile* Miss Arbell as well as that other Miss Arbell she was always talking about." Mrs. Braithwaite shook her head at this, and said "No! no! lad. She's a gude *lile* lassie, I'll warrant; but she's not like Miss Arbell Casterton. *She* had na her match in this world. Ah! it was a sad day for us when she went awa to Lunnon: married and dead since! Married and dead!—and we'll

never see her like ! They may ca' this yan Arbell ; but she'll never be Arbell to me, nor to t' Vicar, nor to Measter, thof ye do tell me he seems to love her above a bit. It's for her *name's* sake, lad ; and because he's a kind heart that loves all innocent creatures. He canna love her as he did his darling niece that's dead and gone !

"Are ye ready for bed now ? Make t' door fast, and come softly oop t' stairs. Not that they will ony o' them hear if Airey force was to tumble into their bed-rooms. They'll sleep like a' the seven sleepers the story book tells on.

"Yes, lad. I'm tired too ; but I'd rather have sat oop for a week than had ye come along in that sturm. I was *turble* oneasy for fear ye was on Harter Fell at the time. When ye didn't come after a little, I felt sure ye'd have had the sense to stop awhile oop at t' auld castle. Ye're a gude lad, James, and may God bless you!"

Five minutes later, and everything about Mr. Casterton's house was in perfect repose.

The moon shone through Arbell's bed-room window on her pale, young face, as it had often shone on that of her mother, as she reposed on that same bed, in that same room.

The moon shone in that night on Miss Travers, in her room at Eastgate House. She was not asleep ; but, with open eyes, lay pondering on all that Mr. Casterton had proposed to do for Arbell. "I shall lose her !" she thought. "My darling ! The child that I have reared for my own. But if it is for her benefit ? No, I will not be so selfish as to influence her fate by a wish for myself. As yet, however, she is mine. She cannot have

learned *to-day* that she is heiress of Glenara Castle, and is no longer dependent on a school-mistress. No one has as yet told her that she belongs to any one but to me. God bless her ever! She will never forget me and my love. I am sure of that. Arbell has a loving, grateful disposition."

CHAPTER V.

THE NEXT MORNING.

“ Then to come in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good morrow,
Through the sweet brier or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine.”

MILTON.

Do you remember how you have felt on first awaking in the morning in a strange place? And do you remember how you have felt on first awaking in the morning of the day after something extraordinary has happened? Again, do you remember how you have felt on awaking the morning after a day of great bodily fatigue? If you do, put all these sensations together, and you will have some faint idea of the state of little Arbell's mind as she opened her eyes, languidly, on the morning after her arrival at Blacktarn. Her first thought was, “ Dear me! how very tired I am.” The second was, “ Where am I? I don't remember coming to bed last night.” Then half rising in the bed to look round her apartment, she thought, “ What a pretty room! How gay and cheerful it looks! I never slept in such a pretty room before! But where am I?” Then rubbing her eyes a little, and putting the hair off her forehead, the fact that she was actually at Mr. Cas-

terton's house, in Westmoreland—more than two hundred miles from Eastgate House—flashed across her mind; and she sank back on the pillow to think *what* it was that happened yesterday. In a few minutes more she was perfectly awake; and recalled her adventure at Glenara Castle. Everything else seemed to fade into insignificance before that recollection; and that which, yesterday morning, she had believed would be one of the great events in her life—a thing she should never forget, viz., the journey from London to Westmoreland, was now passed rapidly over, as a matter scarcely worth thinking about in comparison with what had happened to her in that old castle.

For a few moments she believed that it must be all a dream. She was very tired last night. She had slept in the carriage. Surely she had dreamed that old General Dudley was her grandfather. She often did dream that she saw her father and mother. But no! The more wide awake she became, the more distinctly did she remember the occurrences of last night. The beautiful scenery after they left Kendal; the increasing darkness; the great black clouds; the storm; *that*, certainly was no dream. Then, their entrance into the hall at Glenara;—she remembered its name perfectly—then Mr. Casterton's fetching them from the hall, and taking them into the grand saloon; and their sitting down before the proud-looking old General, with the bright blue eyes and grey hair.

"No, no," said Arbell, half aloud, "it was not a dream."

As she spoke, the curtain beside her was gently withdrawn, and she saw Hannah smiling at her affectionately.

"So you are awake, at last, Miss Arbell. How do you feel, now?"

"Very tired, Hannah. What time is it?"

"Eleven o'clock."

"Then I suppose I must get up. Oh! I am so tired. I should like to lie in bed for a week."

Hannah kissed her, and said, "You would be glad enough to get up long before the week was over. But, if you are so very tired you shall have your breakfast before you get up. It has been ready for you a long time. I will go and fetch it."

"Stay! Where are Georgy and Mr. Casterton. Have they had breakfast?"

"Long ago. Mr. Casterton was called away to see an old woman who is very ill, and as you were still fast asleep, Miss Georgy went with him, to look at the country. Such a beautiful place as this I never saw! But it must be very dreary and dull in the winter time. There's only one house within half a mile."

"But what is that noise like roaring and the splashing of water?" asked Arbell. "Before I was quite awake I thought we were in the train again."

"See!" said Hannah, walking to the window, which was opposite the bed, and drawing back the curtain, "you told me we should see mountains, and cataracts, and waterfalls, and such like. Now, what do you think of *that* for an opposite neighbour?"

Arbell, as she lay in bed, could see what Hannah wished her to see. It was a beautiful waterfall. There was a rocky opening between two mountains which seemed to rise within three hundred yards of the window, and through the opening, down

tumbled a white, foaming stream, making the noise which Arbell had remarked. She started up, and forgetting how tired she was, ran to the window. What a prospect !

It was a bay window, and the view was extensive. All around were mountains ; and on one side they opened away to a great distance. But the stream and the waterfall riveted her attention. She saw that it ran into a large dark-looking expanse of water at some little distance.

" Is that the Blacktarn ? " she asked.

" Yes. A *Tarn*, Mrs. Braithwaite tells me, is a small lake high up among the mountains ; and we are pretty high up among them here, as you will see when you go out into the garden. Get into bed again, now, my dear. I will go and get your breakfast."

" Oh ! I don't want any breakfast now. I should like to get up directly and go out there."

" All in good time, my dear. Let me bring you your breakfast first. You will not feel so tired when you have had it. Besides, I have got something to tell you. Get into bed again. You can have the curtain undrawn and look at the waterfall while you lie in bed."

" Oh ! that will be delicious !" exclaimed Arbell, " to see the mountains and that lovely waterfall as I lie in bed—there could not be anything more delightful ! Put the pillow up a little higher. There ! that will do nicely. And now, set the window wide open before you go. Oh ! what a delicious breeze. That's real mountain air. How fresh it is ! Hark ! what a noise that dashing, roaring waterfall makes. What a dear lovely thing ! I suppose it keeps on like that always."

"It makes a deal more noise in the early spring, Mrs. Braithwaite says, when the snow melts on the tops of the mountains. Then it comes rushing down in a torrent, and brings great stones and young trees and earth with it. It sometimes does a deal of mischief, she says. Now cover yourself up and lie still till I come."

Arbell did so; and so beautiful and altogether new was the sight before her eyes, that it quite took away her thoughts from the subject that was ready to press in upon her mind the moment it was disengaged.

While she was enjoying her breakfast of hot cakes and new milk, Hannah sat beside her and told her what she thought of Mrs. Braithwaite. When she had quite finished her meal, Hannah spoke of something that was more interesting.

"You know, my dear Miss Arbell, I left you and Miss Georgy in that room, at the Castle yonder, to go and find Mr. Casterton, and tell him that the carriage was ready. I found him at last. There was a little room outside the one where he was—an ante-room, I think it is called. Here I saw one of the men-servants fast asleep on a chair. James Braithwaite says that the old General is too proud to consider his servants, and they are all very much afraid of him. He makes that poor man, who is his own valet, sit up half the night to attend to his whims. When I saw him there, I thought I would just make bold to wake him, and ask a question. He started up quite frightened—

"'Is Mr. Casterton in any of the rooms hereabouts?' asked I.

"'Yes. He's in there with master. Do you want him? If you do, you had better go and tell him so

yourself. Master's in such a rage that I'd rather not go in. He wont storm at you. You're a stranger and a woman.'

"I was glad of an opportunity of seeing him, you may be sure, Miss Arbell, after what had happened to you. If he was Captain Dudley's father, thought I to myself, I dare say I shall see the likeness. I remember my old master, your papa, Miss, well enough. So I went into the room, and as I walked up to Mr. Casterton, I gave a sharp look at your grandpapa. He *is* your grandpapa, sure enough. He looked very curiously at me, and stopped what he was saying; and then I saw that his eyes, and nose, and forehead were just like your papa's. As I was going out of the room, I gave quite a start, for there, in a great picture, stood your papa himself.

"'What is the matter, Hannah?' said Mr. Casterton.

"I pointed to the picture, and said, 'That startled me, Sir.'

"He then said, 'Stop a minute,' and whispered something to your grandfather, and then I heard *his* voice, for all the world like your father's, Miss Arbell, only louder and sterner.

"'Pray, young woman, did you ever see the original of that portrait?' he said.

"I thought to myself, 'Well, he sha'n't browbeat me, though he does frighten all his own servants.' So I turned round and looked at him, just *so*—quite respectful—but not a bit afraid. 'Yes, Sir. I was Mrs. Dudley's maid for five years. That is a picture of Captain Dudley.'

"'Come here, young woman!' he said, in rather

a milder tone. ‘Tell me what you know about Captain Dudley.’

“Well, Miss, I had not a great deal of good to say of him, as I have often told you, for I always took part with your poor mamma, who was the sweetest lady as ever lived. Now, as the gentleman was his father, I didn’t like to say much to him, any more than I like to say it to you, who are his daughter. I just said, very quick, all about my mistress’s running away from him, and my coming to England with her and you. And how my new mistress, Miss Travers, took us both into her house, after your poor mamma’s death, and how we have lived there ever since.

“He listened very attentively to what I said, and seemed quite angry at the last part, and swore an oath, and said something about ‘charity brat!’ and ‘beggarly school-mistress!’ Oh! how I longed to tell him a bit of my mind. If that dear, kind Mr. Casterton had not been there, I certainly should have spoke up against such wicked pride and ungratefulness. It didn’t become *him*, or any of his family, to call Miss Travers ‘a beggarly school-mistress.’”

When Hannah ceased speaking, she saw that Arbell’s cheek glowed with indignation, like her own. Arbell’s eyes flashed, and then Hannah thought that what Mr. Casterton had said was right. “She is a true Dudley! Those blue eyes are like her father’s and her grandfather’s now.”

“Did my grandfather say such things?” she exclaimed, indignantly. “Oh! Hannah, you should have turned directly and told him that they were false. How dare he say such things! It makes

me feel quite ashamed to belong to such a family. I would rather be a poor tradesman's daughter and find my relations grateful. Oh ! Hannah, Hannah. It makes me very unhappy. How can I respect my grandfather if he says such things of the only friend who saved me from the workhouse when I was a baby, and has been as kind as ever she could be ever since ? Why, if it had not been for her, I should have died, perhaps, or been brought up among wicked ignorant people, who would have taught me all sorts of bad things. I might have been a little thief, I might have grown up to love wickedness, and sometimes I think if I were tempted and provoked as poor people are, I should be very bad. I might even come to be hanged. Don't smile, Hannah. I have read enough about the way little children, who have no kind friends, often grow up, to know that I should not have been any better than they. I am very passionate. I do not like work. I feel a great many bad feelings in me sometimes. I think many people have come to be hanged who had no worse dispositions when they were little than I had when my dear Aunt Harriet took us both into her house. You don't know how much I think about that. And then to hear her called a 'beggarly schoolmistress,' because she did take care of a 'charity brat.' You know General Dudley was right *there*. I am a 'charity brat.' Better be that than ungrateful."

Hannah took Arbell in her arms, and did her best to console her. In a very short time she recovered herself and spoke very sensibly, as she generally did after having had what she called "an explosion." She lay back in bed quietly, still holding Hannah's hand—

"I hope Aunt Harriet and Mrs. Vernon may be true prophets, and that when I get a little older I may obtain more control over my feelings. It is really very wrong to give way to them as I do. Now, I have given myself a headache, and made you uncomfortable—and all for what? Why, just because I got angry that a relation of mine, who knows nothing of me or of Miss Travers, said cruel things of us both. Mrs. Vernon says that faults of temper are very catching, and that a child who lives constantly with ill-tempered people will grow up ill-tempered. Now suppose, Hannah—only suppose—if, instead of being brought up as I have been, in the midst of that happy school, I had been sent down to my cross old grandfather as soon as poor mamma died. He would not have allowed you to be with me, I dare say. What sort of a girl should I have been now, do you think?"

"Oh!" said Hannah, "it would be quite dreadful to think of. My dear child, does not this show how true it is that we, none of us, know what is best for us? How much better does God provide for us than we can for ourselves. Sometimes I have thought what an unfortunate thing it was for you that you were obliged to be dependent upon a lady like Miss Travers, instead of riding about in a carriage, and having a governess at home all to yourself, and a fine house to live in; for I knew well enough that was what you were born to. I knew your papa came of a high family, and that you had grand relations somewhere in England. I used to think you would be much better off if some of them would come to take charge of you. Especially when I have seen you mending the other

young ladies' clothes, and waiting upon the teachers, I used to feel quite proud, and was often going to say, 'It is not proper that Miss Arabella Dudley should do all that for you. She's a great deal more of a lady than any of you.' Yes, dear, I know that it was wrong, but I *did* think it, all the same. And now I see that it was for a wise purpose you were thrown upon the charity of strangers. You have been well brought up. You have learned to consider others, to be kind and good to those about you. This has checked your naturally proud spirit; for you know, my dear, you *are* proud as well as passionate. How could you help being born so, when you are so much like your papa in the face? If you had been brought up by your proud grandpapa to be heiress of his property, you would have been petted and spoiled, and been made like himself, perhaps."

"Yes, Hannah! God has been very good to me, I see. I ought to be very thankful to Him. Besides—as well as being proud, and rude, and tyrannical—I should have led a very dull sort of life, for I dare say I should have had very few friends in that old castle. Ah! it's a very fine thing to think of—Miss Dudley, of Glenara Castle—but, Hannah, I'd rather be what I am—'Little Arbell, at Eastgate House, the school-girl who has no home'—and have you, and Aunt Harriet, and Mrs. Vernon, and dear Georgy, to love me very much, besides plenty of the other girls who like me very well. I am quite vexed with myself for wishing, as I often have wished, that some of my unknown relations would come and fetch me from the school, and give a fine present to Aunt Harriet,

and then make me a fine lady. Now I know better."

"Still, my dear Miss Arbell, I should like you to have your rights. If that great old Castle and the estate belongs to you, as Miss Georgy says she thinks it does, I should like you to have it. Right is right."

"Certainly," said Arbell, laughing, "right is right; but the question is, *what* is right? Now, right is what God thinks best, Hannah. He may have so ordered things that I have no right, as you call it, to Glenara Castle. Perhaps the property does not descend to girls, only to boys. So pray put out of your head all notion of my being lady of the Castle. Who is proud, now, I wonder? Give me a kiss, dear Hannah. Depend upon it we have been allowed to see this relation only that we may rejoice that I was not left to his care, and that we may go back to dear Eastgate House, and think how much better off we are there than we should have been at Glenara Castle. It is not grandeur and wealth that make people happy, it is goodness and usefulness. I will be a good and useful woman, Hannah; and in a year or two I may save dear aunt half the labour of the school. I mean to learn to be a good governess, and work for her in her old age as she worked for me in my childhood. Oh! I mean to be very much happier than if I were living in a lazy, ladylike way, in a castle."

Hannah, though she did not think that teaching in a school was quite the sort of work Miss Arabella Dudley should be employed in (for Hannah could not divest herself of certain foolish worldly preju-

dices, which said that a lady who works for her living is not so much of a lady as one who does not), yet felt instinctively that Arbell's grateful heart had dictated to her a proper object in life. Therefore she did not say anything against it.

"Hannah!" said Arbell, "you have often said that you never heard mamma speak of her own relations, except of her father and an uncle—still she might have many. Now I think of it, Mr. Casterton said last night to my grandfather that I was the child of *his niece*. Perhaps he may be the kind uncle whom poor mamma used to speak of. How very strange if it should be so! What made him come to London directly he saw my name in Georgy's letter? What has made him take so much interest in me? I am sure that he loves me very much. Oh! Hannah! to have dear Mr. Casterton for a near relation!"

"Yes. That is better than old General Dudley. Perhaps, too, your mamma's father may be alive. He was a clergyman, I know."

"Yes. Aunt Harriet told me that once. But she did not know whether he was alive or dead. He would be my grandfather as much as General Dudley, and I might like him very much. I want to have some relations to like."

"Of course you do, my dear. Well, you must talk to Mr. Casterton about this. Would you like to get up now?"

"Oh! yes. I should like to have a good long talk with dear Mr. Casterton before I go anywhere or see anything. I can't enjoy anything properly while I am all curiosity and anxiety about my unknown relations. Oh! I see there is a bath in

that corner. Are all my things ready for me to put on? Thank you, dear, kind Hannah. When you are feeble and bed-ridden, then I will wait on you," she added, laughing.

It was not a usual thing for Hannah to wait on Arbell, although Hannah would willingly have done it; but Miss Travers forbade her to do so, as she wished her adopted daughter to be able to wait on herself. She would have wished this, even if she had not kept a school. As it was, it would not have been just that Arbell should have assistance from a servant when the other girls had not.

"Now I shall get up," said Arbell. "My mind is more at ease by this talk, and when I have seen Mr. Casterton, I dare say I shall see my way clear before me. I will ring when I want you, Hannah. Go and take a walk up to that waterfall, and then I can see you while I am dressing."

After Hannah was gone, she went on thinking, "What a comfort to be able to dress with the blinds up! There's one advantage of living in a wilderness I must tell Georgy. Nobody can overlook you. No opposite neighbours—no passers-by! I can look at the sky, and the mountains, and streams, all the time I am getting up in the morning. Then she repeated aloud Eve's morning hymn from Milton's 'Paradise Lost'—

“‘ These are Thy glorious works! Parent of good,
Almighty! Thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair! Thyself how wondrous then!’ ”

Arbell had a great love for poetry, and having early formed a habit of repeating passages of her

favourite poems while she was dressing in the morning, she had a pretty good store of fine poetry in her memory. This habit she owed to Miss Travers ; and she had reason to thank her for it all the days of her life.

CHAPTER VI.

ARBELL'S MOTHER.

" She was a woman in her freshest age
 Of wondrous beauty and of bounty rare,
 With goodly grace and comely personage,
 That was on earth not easy to compare."

SPENSER.

WHEN Arbell was ready to leave her room, just as she was replacing her Bible in its case, and was, at the same time, glancing out at the beautiful prospect before the window, she saw something which made her run close to it, and put her head out.

"Good morning, Arbell!"

Yes; it actually was that happy Georgy Casterton, looking up, and laughing at her, mounted on a pretty black pony. She was dressed in a straw hat and blue habit, and looking as fresh and gay as if she had just come from fairy land, and had never known what it was to be tired on a journey, or scolded in a school-room. But who were all those people with her? A perfect crowd. Oh! then, Blacktarn is not such a solitude after all! One, two, three, four, five people! All on horse-back, or pony-back! *People!* Now that Arbell looked again, and they looked up at her, she saw that Mr. Casterton was the only *person*, properly to be called a person, *i.e.*, a full grown

one. The others were three boys—all unlike each other. One was very fair, another was very dark, and the other was neither dark nor fair. All took off their caps, and bowed, and looked glad to see Arbell. The other person, who, in Arbell's opinion, was not exactly a person, was a girl, no bigger than herself, on a little white pony. She was not like either of the boys; but had long curls of *rather* too bright a red colour; but she had a pretty, merry face. She not only smiled and bowed, but imitated Georgy, and said—

“Good morning, Miss Arbell!”

“Good morning, my dear,” said Mr. Casterton. “Put on your hat or bonnet, or whatever it is proper you should wear on your head, and come out here directly. I must not have you lose any more of this lovely day. Midsummer-day, too! Make haste! Here are some new friends very anxious to be introduced to you.”

Arbell's garden-hat was on in a moment, and she had little difficulty in finding her way down stairs. At the bottom of the stairs appeared a figure which she knew at once must be Mrs. Braithwaite. Tall, erect, and as rigid as if she were endowed with a backboard instead of a spine, square-shouldered and bony, decidedly *military* in her figure and carriage, was Mrs. Braithwaite. But as Arbell looked up into the face of the old dame, she was quite surprised to see what a kind, amiable, womanly expression there was on the wrinkled, though still well-formed features. Her smile and voice too, oddly enough, were rather like her master's, Arbell thought. She smiled at her, and spoke in a broad Westmoreland dialect, like her son's, which, for the future, we shall put

into plainer English, in order that we may save both the printer and the reader the trouble of making it out, having already attempted to give an idea of how it was pronounced.

"Good morning, little lady! Glad to see ye down at last. Ye are too slight and weakly to take they long journeys. They are a'most too much for ye, I'm thinking. Ye look as if the mountain air would do ye a world o' good; but ye'll no forget to eat, and drink too. Ye made but a poor breakfast: mayhap it wasn't to your liking."

"Oh, yes, thank you," said Arbell. "I liked it very much; but I'm not accustomed to breakfast in bed. Wait till to-morrow morning, before you decide that I do not eat a good breakfast. If you give us such nice cakes every day, I'm afraid you will find Georgy and me troublesome people: we shall eat faster than you can make them; but, if you will show me how to make them, I might save you the trouble sometimes."

"I'll be right glad to show you, my little dear. Well now! To think o' that! I didn't think young ladies edicated in a London boarding-school would have condescended to ask an old woman how to make tea-cakes."

"Ah! Mrs. Braithwaite, we have heard how well you make oat-cakes: *riddle-bread* you call it."

"Did master tell you that?" asked the old dame, smoothing her white apron complacently. "Well, he thinks I'm the best hand at it in our parts; but he never tasted Sally Barge's riddle-bread. Bless you, my dear, she's the queen of riddle-bread makers. Now, for porridge, I'll make that with any one in the three counties."

"I should like to learn how to make porridge; but first I am to learn how to eat it: perhaps you will make me some for supper to-night."

"Gladly. It's a fine thing, is porridge! Is it possible you're no used to it in the South? Oh! but the Southrons are a queer folk."

"Come, Arbell," exclaimed Georgy, running towards them, "my Uncle is waiting. You must finish your talk with Mrs. Braithwaite another time. You must not mind my taking her away, but my Uncle wants her."

"Quite right! Quite right!" said Mrs. Braithwaite. "We must not keep the Master waiting. God bless ye both, for a couple of well-favoured lasses," she continued, as they went away. "The one they call *Arbell* is, sure enough, our Arbell's child. There's little of the Casterton look about her; but she is as like the old General and Master Robert as a young pigeon is like an old one. And that reminds me I must go and see after those pigeons for the pie to-day."

And away went Mrs. Braithwaite to the kitchen, to think of the Dudleys and the pigeons, the Castertons and the pie-crust; and to endeavour to instruct Hannah in local history and in the peculiarities of north-country cookery, while with true north-country shrewdness she plunged into the depths of Hannah's own character, and learned all she wished to know about the young ladies and the fine "*Lunnon skeul whor they got their larning.*"

In the meantime, Arbell and Georgy proceeded to the spot where Mr. Casterton was awaiting them, Georgy talking the whole time.

"I've had the most delightful morning—at least, I only wanted *you* with me to make it quite happy.

There's a pony for you, too. Yours is iron-grey. I chose the black one, because he is rather the strongest. He's such a sweet creature, goes so fast; and climbs like a cat up steep places, Cuthbert St. John says. However, Oswald says yours is the best on level ground. I went out with Uncle Stuart, and when he had seen the poor old woman, he asked if I would like to go a little farther for a ride. Of course I said, Yes. We went about three miles farther, and what do you think I saw? Oh! you'll never guess. Well, I saw Ullswater! Just the Patterdale end. While I was looking at it, almost as lovingly as you would have looked, and wondering if there was any place in the world more beautiful, it suddenly came into my head that we had done an unfair thing in going there without you, and I told Uncle so, and asked him to come away. He did so; and as we were riding back, we met three boys and a girl riding along towards us. Of course, they stopped to speak to my Uncle. Everybody we met this morning did. He knows everybody here, and seems to enter into all their affairs as if they were his own. This is much pleasanter than being in London, where people pass each other with as little interest as if they did not belong to the same race. There you know nobody, and care for nobody; here you know everybody, and care for everybody. Julia St. John is a very nice girl, I can see. I think we shall like her. You'd never guess she was Cuthbert's sister. Then, the other two!—there, now, I can't tell you about them!—they will hear me."

And the two girls were in the midst of the equestrian group. Arbell was very fond of animals, especially of ponies, which was rather strange,

considering how very little she had seen of them. Miss Travers had been much accustomed to ride in her youth, and rode well; therefore she was fond of horses, and had inspired Arbell with her taste, besides having taught her to ride herself on a pony hired for the purpose. Arbell very soon became a fearless rider, and would ride about the meadow beside Eastgate House till the three cows left off eating and stared at her. It was a pleasant thing to see Arbell's eyes brighten at the sight of the ponies; but she did not forget to shake hands with Mr. Casterton, who dismounted as they drew near.

"Good morning, my love!" patting her cheek. "All the better for your long sleep, I hope. Are you ready for a walk? I want a little private conversation with you. Don't be alarmed, I have nothing very unpleasant to say. Georgy is going for a further ride with her new acquaintances. Let me introduce them to you. Miss Julia St. John and her brother Cuthbert," and he pointed to the very dark youth; "Oswald Barton and his cousin Laurence." Laurence was the *very* fair boy, and he looked as lazy as a Laurence is generally supposed to be. "Now, boys, I trust to you to take care of Julia and Georgy. Which way will you go, Cuthbert?"

"We thought of going up towards High Street," replied the youth, quite gravely, though Arbell thought he must be joking, to talk of a High Street where there was no town or village for several miles; and she was much puzzled by the short conversation which followed about crossing a beck half way up the High Street. She could not refrain from asking what town they were

talking of. The young people laughed at her question—even Georgy, who said, however, apologetically, “I ought not to laugh at you, for I should never have found out what High Street was if I had been left to myself; but I have learned a great deal about the names of the places about here. Just turn there, to the left, *that* great mountain is called High Street.”

Arbell was not to be taken in in that way. She only laughed, and said, “Oh! and *that*,” pointing to another mountain, “I suppose that is Piccadilly, and this great mass here is Oxford Street, most probably.”

“I can’t help it if you won’t believe,” said Georgy. “It *is* the wolf this time. I am not playing you any trick.”

“No! I assure you it is quite true. This great bare mountain, of which Blacktarn Fell forms a limb, is actually called High Street,” said Oswald Barton.

Arbell looked at Mr. Casterton for an explanation of what seemed to her so foolish a name. He smiled at her. “That is right, my dear! do not believe every assertion that seems to you contrary to common sense without examining into the truth of it. In this case, however, what seems to you so very improbable is perfectly true. This mountain is called High Street: the reason for the name is this. Very near the top of it the ancient Romans, when they had possession of our island, constructed one of their famous durable roads. It is quite easy to trace the course which that road takes even now, as I will show you, and Georgy too, at some other time. It is worth seeing, if for no other reason than that it is by far the highest

road ever made in England. The mountain is 2700 feet high. This road seems to have been carried over some of the adjoining heights."

"Tough work for the Roman soldiers, that must have been," said Laurence. "Fancy making a road on the top of High Street! Why, the snow lies there half the year, and the other half it rains or blows great guns; to say nothing of its being covered with a fog like a wet blanket. I should not have liked the post of a Centurion quartered up there,"

"Now, I think I should have liked it of all things," said Oswald. "That was really a great work, the construction of such a road. Don't you think so, Mr. Casterton?"

"A great labour, certainly," he replied. "But we know so little of the object for which the road was made that I can't decide whether I should like to have helped to make it. Perhaps it was wanted to keep the Westmerians of those days in subjection. A difficult thing when they got among these mountains. Britons as you are, you are quite safe from the Roman legions on the High Street now; so take my niece as far as you have time to go before dinner. Remember, Georgy, I do not keep fashionable hours, or rather I do, only I call the meals by old-fashioned names. My dinner is what your papa calls luncheon, and my supper is what he calls his dinner, that is all. However, dinner or luncheon, whichever you please to call it, will be on the table at one o'clock. You have just one hour before the dressing-bell rings. Remember, I love punctuality as well as Miss Travers. There! off with you—keep your rein well up, Georgy."

Mr. Casterton and Arbell stood watching the party as they cantered away over the Fell, along the edge of the tarn.

"I am afraid you are longing to be with them, my dear Arbell. But, as I have a good deal to say to you on a subject which weighs upon both our minds, I have set apart the next hour for conversation. I must get rid of my horse first, though, as he will not be of much assistance in it. Come with me to the stable, and then I can show you the pony you are to ride while you stay here."

"You are very kind to think of getting a pony for me, Sir," said Arbell, who really felt very grateful to Mr. Casterton.

"I am very glad to be able to give you the opportunity of riding, my dear child. I have half-a-dozen ponies running loose on the Fell. We have only to catch one and dress him up a little, and then he is ready for the boys and girls of my acquaintance. Cuthbert and Julia St. John ride two of my ponies. Oh! there is James! James, bring out the little iron-grey pony, which Miss Arbell is to ride."

Arbell was in ecstacies at the sight of him; he was in every way suited to her taste. She liked his size and his colour, and the shape of his head, and the length of his tail.

"When may I have a ride on him?"

"This evening, if you please. I promised Mrs. St. John that you and Georgy would go and take tea with her to-night."

"Capital," said Arbell. "I hope she lives a long way off."

"That is not a very flattering wish," said

Mr. Casterton. "Shall I tell her what you say?"

"Oh! no! I only meant I hoped we should have a good long ride," she said, laughing, as she stroked the pony's neck. "What is the dear thing's name?"

"I do not think any one has given him a name. You may find one for him yourself. What shall it be?"

"Oh! I must take time to think about it, and I must consult Georgy," said Arbell. I'm very particular about the names of my animals: this is, by far, the grandest creature I have ever had to name. I shall want at least twenty-four hours to consider the matter."

James here interposed an observation. "The boys hereabouts call him Grey-Goose, because you see, Miss, he's just that colour."

"Grey-Goose!" exclaimed Arbell. "Oh! that will not do: it sounds as if he were a foolish pony, and I'm sure, by the look of him, that he is a clever one. Don't let them call him Grey-Goose, if you please, James. I will find him a better name. Good-bye, you dear pony," she added, giving the animal another caress, as James led him away.

"Now, my dear," said Mr. Casterton, taking her hand, "let us go out upon the Fell again. There is a seat near the tarn."

To this seat they directed their steps. In spite of the novelty of their environment, Arbell soon found herself wholly engrossed by what Mr. Casterton was saying. As they sat beside Blacktarn, with the mountains around them reflected on its dark, still surface, with no signs of humanity near them but the house and its out-buildings, which

seemed to nestle in a sheltered nook facing the south, she found herself listening as attentively, with her mind as much abstracted from outward things, as if she had been in some place where all was familiar to her senses, such as the little Green Parlour at Eastgate House.

"I am now going to tell you your mother's history. Her name was Arabella Casterton. She was the daughter of my youngest brother, Leonard. My other brother, George, is your friend Georgy's father; so that your mother and Georgy were first cousins, and you and Georgy are, therefore, first cousins, once removed, and I am your great-uncle. I knew that I should surprise you; but there is nothing but what you will find pleasant in *that* surprise, I am sure. Your mother was an only child, and grew up to be a general favourite. She was beautiful, clever, and accomplished, and so amiable that I have rarely, if ever, seen her equal. I loved her as much as if she were my own child.

"Her father, I, and General Dudley, were much attached to each other. We had been schoolfellows, and had been at college together. In after life, when circumstances combined to make your two grandfathers close neighbours (for Leonard was a clergyman, and had this living of Blacktarn at that time, and General Dudley succeeded his father as the owner of Glenara Castle, and went to live there)—when, I say, they were happily placed within five miles of each other, I thought I could not do better than accede to their wishes, and come and live near them, too. My father and mother were dead, my sisters were all married, and my brother George was established in London. I had no particular duty to call me elsewhere, and, as I

loved my native mountains better than any place I had seen in my travels, I determined to settle myself down quietly here, and exert what talents and experience I possessed for the benefit of my neighbours, rich and poor. I bought a portion of these Fells. Yonder ground, where the house stands, and all that above and below it, as far as the tarn on this side, and the fall in the beck on that, is my property. That house I built myself; it is not the vicarage. The vicarage is about a mile off. Mr. St. John, my curate, lives there now. Formerly your grandfather, my brother Leonard, used to live there. He was poor. I was in possession of a good fortune, inherited from an uncle. I was very much attached to Leonard, and resolved to give him the benefit of my fortune, as I did not think it likely that I should marry, and have children of my own; so I enclosed some land, and built this house, and then persuaded him to come and live here, with his wife and child. As his health was delicate and mine was strong, I was of much assistance to him in his parish duties. We were a very happy household, and your mother, 'Arbell,' as she was called, was our darling.

"Our most intimate friends and nearest neighbours were the Dudleys, of Glenara Castle. You saw a little of the place last night. Thirty years ago it looked very different. The General was a young man then, full of warm affection and true generosity. He was of a violent temper—somewhat proud and vindictive to his superiors and equals, harsh and stern, occasionally, to his inferiors. I knew he had those faults, and that, in consequence of leading a life of uncontrolled power in his own domain (for he was the greatest person

in the neighbourhood), it was likely that these faults would increase with years. Still I loved him. We do not love people because they have no faults, my child. If we waited till we met with a person without faults before we attached ourselves, we might wait till our death without a friend. And that would not prove that we were better than other people, and that we prized virtue more. Do you think it would?"

"No, Sir," said Arbell, "I think it would only prove that we were unaffectionate and very self-conceited and proud. Oh! no. We do not love our friends because they are free from faults. Sometimes our friends have faults that we very much dislike—at least, mine have; faults that vex me and make me angry—but I should not think of leaving off loving them because of *that*. What would become of *me*, I should like to know, if people only liked one another because they are free from faults? Everybody that knows me knows that I am violent and impatient in temper, besides having a hundred other faults of less importance. Don't you think it is for their good qualities, or because we have grown up with them, or because they love us, that we love our friends, and not because we think they have no bad qualities? I am not quite *sure* about that. I know there are *some* faults which would make it impossible for me to like any one—if they were ever so clever, or ever so fond of me, or if I had known them all my life. I could not love any one who was mean, or very worldly, or very much wrapped up in self; and I think I could like any one who was unselfish and generous, even if they were full of other faults."

"There is a great deal to be said on this subject,

my dear, and I have not time to enter into it now; but this I must say—your grandfather, General Dudley's, faults were not of the kind which *I* could not tolerate in a friend. He was truthful and generous in the midst of all his faults; and he was sincerely attached to my brother and to me. He had an only son, Robert, your father. This son, General Dudley and his wife indulged in the most injudicious way, so that the boy became very much disliked by us all; except by his pet and plaything, your mother, who was several years his junior. The only unhappiness of her childhood was caused by his misconduct and the feeling she had that nobody liked Robert at Blacktarn. She took his part, and often allowed him to lead her into scrapes because she wished to share his punishment."

"Dear mamma!" exclaimed Arbell. "Papa must have been very fond of her."

"I believe he was, my dear. I think he loved her better than anything in the world except himself. I am sorry to say that children who are injudiciously indulged, as Robert Dudley was, are almost sure to grow up selfish and unprincipled."

"Poor papa!" sighed Arbell, "what a dreadful thing! But it was not his fault. Why did his parents behave so badly to him? Surely they knew better?"

"Yes; I think his father knew better. But, as I have told you, he was passionate, wilful, and had strong unreasoning affections. He could not bear to see Robert corrected for little faults when he was a child; and, as he grew older, Mrs. Dudley, who was a weak, foolish mother, endeavoured to hide his faults from his father because she was aware

that they deserved punishment, and she feared to see him made unhappy, even for a moment,—quite overlooking the fact which stood before her eyes every day, viz., that her son suffered more from his own faults than he could have suffered by their correction. But old Mrs. Dudley's love was selfish as well as foolish. She feared that she should suffer herself at the sight of Robert's punishment. As a boy, he was clever and high-spirited; but wilful, greedy, passionate, and without affection for any one. He feared his father a little, and that was all. He went to school and to college, and each time he came home, we, at Blacktarn, liked him less. Your sweet mother always took his part, and that kept up the childish affection she had entertained for him. When he was a young man, he fell in love, as it is called, with your mother. He made her promise to marry him at some future time, and insisted that she should not inform her friends of this engagement. He wished to keep the matter secret, because his father had formed a plan of marrying him to the daughter of an Earl in this county. Your father behaved ill in that matter. He allowed Lady Sophia D—— to suppose that he wished to marry her. He promised his father that he would do so; and, on the strength of that promise, his father gave him a large sum of money to pay his debts. With this sum of money he did not pay his debts, but carried out a scheme which he had contrived for marrying your mother and living abroad. Your mother was then staying in Yorkshire, on a visit with some friends, for change of air. Her health had declined ever since her secret engagement: she was unhappy, I believe, at the sort of deception she was carrying

on. Your father followed her thither, and persuaded her to marry him. He believed that she would inherit all my property, and that I and her father and mother would only be too glad that she should marry the only son of General Dudley. When the news of this marriage reached us all, it was productive of the most painful effects. The General was furious with him. Your mother had never been a favourite, even when she was a child, probably because most people were in the habit of contrasting the style of education which he used with Robert and that which her parents adopted with her, and the comparison was never in Robert's favour. Afterwards, when she grew up into a beautiful and accomplished woman, he was afraid that Robert might wish to marry her instead of Lady Sophia D——. Besides, he saw that she both disliked and feared him, and that she had great influence over his son. As soon as he heard the news of the marriage, he called for his horse, and rode furiously to this house. I was not at home. He saw my brother and his wife. He accused them of having favoured and brought about this marriage; said many untrue things concerning your mother; and vowed that he would never see or speak to her or his son again. My poor brother, who was himself afflicted at this marriage, because he believed that Robert Dudley would make a bad husband to his darling child, was far too sad at heart, and, I may add, too good a Christian, to retaliate upon General Dudley. He kept a dignified silence, and allowed the angry man to vent all the bitterness of his heart. He then turned away, and left him without saying a word. Poor Leonard! he never recovered that

day; but sank into a state of settled melancholy, and died within a year. His wife followed him the next year, and I have been alone in this house ever since.

"Now, Arbell, I must tell you of *my* faults. I acted unkindly to your mother. When she wrote to me, on the day of her marriage, asking my forgiveness, I took no notice of her letter. Her father and mother wrote to her gently and forgivingly. I would not write. The thought that she had deceived us all turned my heart against her. I was almost as angry with her as General Dudley was with his son. She had disappointed all my hopes. She had acted ill in the most important business in which a woman is called upon to act. Arabella Casterton, my niece, my darling, had allowed her judgment to be blinded by her affections. She had married a man whom it would be impossible for her to love, honour, and obey; for he was selfish, dishonourable, and tyrannical. He was handsome, graceful, clever, and liked to please her; beyond that she had not looked. It seemed to me as if she had willingly cast aside all love and respect for her parents and for myself; that she had deceived us, and had stifled the voice of her own conscience—for she knew that the man whom she had married did not love and serve God as she did. She had heard also that he was engaged to marry some one else."

Here Mr. Casterton paused in his narrative, for a time, to console poor Arbell, who was weeping bitterly.

"Nay, nay, my dear child, I did not intend to make you so unhappy. I was angry, and misjudged her. Your dear mamma did not believe that her

parents would really disapprove of her marriage. She did not commit any great fault against *me*, my dear; and I had no right to be angry with her. I have deeply repented my coldness and severity to her. I have been punished for that. We are all punished for the faults we commit in this world. Your poor mamma forgot her duty when she married—her duty both to God and to her parents—and that marriage was her punishment. I forgot my duty of forgiveness. I was even cruel, for I wrote coldly and severely to your mother on the occasion of the death of each of her parents. I gave her no kind word, no consolation. She was then in India with her husband. Some years after, when she sought refuge in England, she feared to come to me; and I, who had by that time recovered all my old feeling towards her, did not know that she needed my protection, and was deprived of the blessing of receiving her into my house. And you, my child, who might have been the joy of my declining years, passed into other hands. This was my punishment, and I deserved it.

" You know all that Miss Travers and Hannah can tell you about your mother. Since I have heard Miss Travers' account of her last illness, and her sad confessions, I see how much, how very much she was to be pitied, and how little she was to blame. Your father's death you also know.

" And now let me look at your kind benefactress's conduct. Miss Travers is one of those women whom the world does not love and honour as it should. She has been a better mother and protector to you than your own mother could have

been, had you been brought up in your father's house. You have not known the misery of seeing your parents disagree. You have not seen your father ill-treat your mother. Had you been sent, in infancy, to your grandfather at Glenara, you would have been an heiress, but you would have been the spoiled plaything of an old and capricious man. Had you been sent to me, here, I, too, might have spoiled you, for I am an old man, and not used to the management of children. Now, in all your mother's circle of friends—among those whom I did not know—she always reckoned Harriet Travers as the one of most sterling merit, and I am sure that it was a consolation to her, on her death-bed, to leave you with her. Miss Travers has given me a convincing proof of her pure and unselfish affection for you."

"Oh! tell me of it, dear *Uncle*. May I call you Uncle? Tell me all the good you can of her. I have never loved her half enough. I begin now to see how much I owe to her. I do not think my own mamma could have been kinder, or have taken more pains with me; and yet, you know, I could not have been really the same as her *own child* to her. She knew that I did not really belong to her. She has had all the trouble and very little of the pleasure of having a child. Do you know, I have sometimes been ungrateful to her—thought ill of her—spoken ill of her!" And Arbell wept again.

Mr. Casterton spoke gravely. "If you have any ingratitude to accuse yourself of towards Miss Travers, I would not have you console yourself for it very easily. But I am sure you cannot be truly ungrateful. Perhaps you have, in the natural

impatience and warmth of your character, spoken hasty words against her when she has done something to vex you. She may have trifling faults of character which jar against your feelings sometimes. Is it so?"

Arbell blushed deeply, but could not utter a syllable.

" You think so, I see," he continued. " Let me remind you of one thing, my child. You are too young not to be liable to make many and strange mistakes in your judgment of grown people. From your peculiar temper you are also likely to come to hasty and sometimes (when people offend you) to severe judgments about their actions. Our Saviour has said to grown persons, ' Judge not, lest ye be judged.' What think you would He have said to girls like you, who pronounced judgment upon those set in authority over them; especially upon those who had especial claim to love and reverence? He would probably have said, ' Pray that ye enter not into temptation.' I do not say that Miss Travers may not have faults which you, a clever, quick-sighted girl, may easily detect; you cannot help seeing them, but you can help dwelling upon them, even in thought; you can try to avoid calling them forth; you can exercise gentleness and forbearance when they wound you; you can carefully avoid speaking of them, and can disown all disrespectful allusions to them among your companions; and, best of all, since she loves you, you can comfort her while she is suffering from the effects of her faults, for she, and all grown people, as well as children, suffer much from the effects of their own faults. You can let her see then, more than ever, that you *love* her,

and that her faults, whatever they may be, you can bear and think lightly of, because they belong to her."

"I can! I can!" said Arbell. "I will. And she has only *one* fault that I know of. One that anybody else in her place would have ten times worse, I am sure; and this fault is very seldom seen. Perhaps, too, I may be wrong. The fault, after all, may be in *me*. I should not be surprised if it were so, only that she spoke of it herself the other day. She is not at all proud. I begin to think I do not know her character yet, though I have lived with her ever since I can remember."

Mr. Casterton smiled. "Ah! my child! presumption is the fault of your age. And did you really think you knew Miss Travers well?"

"Oh, no! Indeed, no!" cried Arbell, eagerly. "I do not think *that*. I know that there are many things about her which I shall not be able to appreciate till I am grown up—perhaps never. Oh, do not think me worse than I am. I am not so horribly conceited as to think I quite understand any grown person. Indeed, I am not."

Mr. Casterton put his hand kindly on her shoulder, and said, soothingly, "I am glad that you are anxious to throw off this charge. It proves to me that it is not a correct one. And now let me tell you how your Aunt Harriet showed the unselfishness of her affection for you, and her anxiety that all honour should be paid to your mother's child. When I called on her first, and told her privately of my relationship to your mother, and of your father's exact position in the world, which it seems she did not know—being merely aware that he was born of a good family in your mother's native

county—she betrayed a very natural fear lest you should be taken from her ; and I saw that she loved you too deeply to bear easily the thought of parting with you. She told me that your mother had expressed the greatest dread of your falling into the hands of your father's family, and would not give her your grandfather's address, or any clue by which he might be found. She also exacted a promise from Miss Travers that she would never *endeavour* to restore you to any of your relations, unless poverty or death should put it out of her power to fulfil her intention of adopting you. She said that the only one of her relations with whom she would willingly trust you, was an uncle in Westmoreland. That uncle Miss Travers was soon convinced, from what I told her, was myself, and on that ground she readily trusted you with me. My brother George's family she has not known many years, it seems. She suspected that he was your mother's uncle, but did not think herself bound to make you known to him, lest he should be the means of carrying you off from her to some of your unknown relations, whom she desired to keep *unknown* as long as she had the power of bringing you up as she desired. The friendship which subsisted between you and Georgy was, as you know, the means of bringing me to London. I had been making a search for you in various quarters ; for when the news of your father's death reached Glenara Castle, the story of your mother's flight to England, with her child, came thither also. General Dudley swore that he did not care whether you were alive or dead. He would never take any notice of you. In vain I remonstrated with him, trying to convince him that his son's child had a

claim upon him which no fault of her parents could destroy. He still persisted in renouncing all care for, or interest in the child, if ever it should be found. This I felt to be wrong, and I determined, if I found Robert Dudley's child, to try to restore it to its grandfather's favour. His property, I thought, ought to descend to that child on his death, instead of being given to a stranger. This seemed to me due to your mother's memory. The second time that I saw Miss Travers we spoke of your future prospects, and I found that she seemed averse to making you a schoolmistress. She said 'it was a hard life—too hard for you.' I offered to leave you my property without exacting from her the sacrifice of her adopted child. This made her very happy, and she was delighted to let you visit me here. I told her that it would not be possible to keep the fact that you were Captain Dudley's child a secret in this neighbourhood; and that I should consider it my duty to persuade the General to acknowledge you as his granddaughter and heiress. After a long pause, during which she seemed to be undergoing a conflict in her own heart, she said to me, 'Mr. Casterton, I desire that child's welfare more than my own. I would wish to do for her what her own mother would do. I think if she were alive now she would think it right that Arbell should inherit her ancestral possessions, and that her father's father should acknowledge her before the world. I have no claim upon the dear child. I have no right to keep her in a position inferior to that in which she was born. It would only be selfish in me. I ought to be thankful that she has been lent to me for so long. Take her with you to the North, and do for

her what you think right without regard to me. She will not forget me, I know. But it is natural that she should be glad to be owned by her own relations, and that she should wish to move in a loftier sphere than that of a schoolmistress, if she discover that it is her natural one. She is somewhat ambitious, I believe. I will not oppose it even by a contrary wish.' When she said this, the tears were in her eyes, and I knew that it cost her much to resign you to strangers—there was real love in her tone. Arbell, you ought to thank God for having such a friend as Miss Travers."

As he said these words Arbell slipped her hand from his, and making a sign that she must go, ran away to the house. She could not bear to control her feelings any longer. In her own room she gave vent to her emotion, and poured forth her heart in prayer and thanksgiving. She thanked God for having raised up such a friend to her orphan childhood, and prayed that He would make her worthy to sustain and comfort that friend as she declined in years.

Arbell was calm when Hannah summoned her to dinner, though her eyes were red with weeping.

CHAPTER VII.

LIFE AND SOCIETY AT BLACKTARN.

“The outward shows of sky and earth,
Of hill and valley, he hath viewed;
And impulses of deeper birth,
Have come to him in solitude.”

“They see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free.”

WORDSWORTH.

“Now, Arbell, have you almost finished that long letter?” said Georgy, coming into her friend’s room, just as she was writing the words, “I remain, dear Aunt, your grateful and affectionate child, Arbell.” “What a tremendous letter! It’s the longest letter you ever wrote in your life, I am sure. I could never write such a letter to any one. I never know what to say when I have a letter to write.”

“That’s only because you *have* really nothing to say. When you want to tell anybody something that they would like to know particularly, or when you have a great deal to ask, I am quite sure you would write as long a letter as this very easily. That letter you wrote to your papa about me was almost as long as this. Ah! Georgy, if it had not been for that letter, I never should have found out that you and I are cousins. I never should have known dear Uncle Stuart (he’s *my*

uncle, you know, as well as yours), and I never should have come down into this beautiful place. I never——”

“Yes,” interrupted Georgy, “I really ought to take credit to myself for that letter. I remember I was very proud when I sent it off, for it was the longest letter I ever wrote, and looked quite grand when it was folded up. The bad spelling was not to be seen then,” she added, laughing. “Have you told Miss Travers all that has happened since we left her and the rest of them at Euston Square? How long ago that seems! I can scarcely believe it was only yesterday morning; it is much more like a whole year. I should like to see what you have said. May I?”

Arbell hesitated, and then said, “You must not think it unkind, Georgy, but I should not like any one, not even you, to see what I have said in this letter. It is about Aunt Harriet herself, and my poor papa and mamma, a great deal more than it is about what happened yesterday. Indeed I have almost forgotten that anything did happen yesterday. Other things have put it out of my head.”

Georgy looked, at first, a little vexed; but whether she was vexed at herself for making what now seemed to her an indelicate request, or whether she was vexed at Arbell for refusing to comply with it, I cannot pretend to say. Arbell left her desk, and put her arms round her friend’s neck.

“Georgy, dear, indeed, indeed I would show you this, if I could. Stop, I think you may read all the first part,” and she turned to take up the letter.

"No, Arbell," said Georgy, stopping her hand, "I would not read any of it for the world. It was very wrong in me to ask. But I am too curious, everybody says. Of course I ought to have known that there were many things you would want to say to Miss Travers that you could not wish any one else to see. No! I will not look. Come, make haste and seal it, and get it off your mind, for the ponies will be ready in ten minutes, and Hannah will bring up the new skirt she has been contriving out of a gown of her own."

"Ponies!" exclaimed Arbell. "I had really quite forgotten all about them. I have been so very busy with this letter. There, it is done! How funny it seems to be directing a letter to Aunt Harriet. I never did such a thing before. I have hardly ever been away from her for a day. I wonder how she will look when she opens it."

"Why! she will be very pleased, of course," said Georgy. "Here comes Hannah! Well, Hannah, how have you managed? Capitally! See, Arbell! you have nothing to do but to tie this long black skirt round your waist, and put on your little black silk jacket, and then you have something as good as a regular habit, and can have the comfort of slipping it off when you get there, whereas I shall be obliged to sit down to tea in my habit. I hope Mrs. St. John is not a very particular person."

"Hannah! have you actually taken the bodice off your new merino gown on purpose to let me have the skirt to ride in?"

"Yes, Miss. I would not have offered such a thing, only I have never worn it, and it would not matter to you whether it were bought for me or

for you. Black merino is black merino ; and ladies wear it, sometimes, as well as servants. I think it will be just the thing for you. And in this outlandish place I should have had to wait a week before I could have bought the stuff to make you one. I hope you wont be above wearing this."

" You naughty Hannah !" said Arbell, kissing her. " You don't understand what I mean. I am quite sorry you have spoiled your nice new gown for me ; but you shall have a better one instead. I know my Uncle Stuart will give you one."

" Hear her !" exclaimed Georgy. " My Uncle Stuart ! How soon you claim your relations, cousin Arbell. Make haste ! Where is your hat ? I hear the horses. Gloves ! gloves ! Clean handkerchief ! There now ! I think she will do very well, Hannah."

" She looks very nice, as she always does, Miss Georgy ; but you look very badly dressed. Let me set your habit right. There, that is better ! Why did you not ring for me ?"

" Because I knew you were altering that skirt for Arbell. Come down, now ; there is Uncle calling. He has got such a pretty old-fashioned whip for you. He would not give it me."

" It was her mamma's whip, Mrs. Braithwaite says. We all know in the kitchen, my dear Miss Arbell. Mrs. Braithwaite has been hearing all about you from master ; and she's been crying for joy to think you are your mamma's child. She longs to speak to you, and to look at you. Wont you come to the kitchen a minute, before you go out ?"

" To be sure I will, Hannah. Let us go down.

the back stairs, now. You go to Uncle, Georgy. I will be with you in a few minutes."

"Don't be long," whispered Georgy, "there will be plenty of time to-morrow for Mrs. Braithwaite to weep over you. Don't let her get too romantic."

Arbell could not help laughing at the idea of Mrs. Braithwaite becoming romantic. She thought it as likely as that her son James should become so. When she reached the kitchen, however, she was compelled to acknowledge that it was not always wise to judge people by their looks. There sat the stiff, military, precise Mrs. Braithwaite, who had seemed to her, in the morning, to be made for nothing but to keep a bachelor's house in perfect order, and to superintend the scrubbing-brush and washing-tub when she was not actually engaged in preserving, pickling, and making butter and cheese—there sat that active, businesslike old woman, weeping, with her white apron thrown over her head, rocking herself to and fro on a little chair, in the chimney angle, though there was no fire there; but it was her usual seat whenever she did sit down, either in summer or winter, which was rarely before the evening.

"Mrs. Braithwaite," said Hannah, leading Arbell up to her, "here is my young lady come to see you. She knows you were an old friend of her mamma's."

The old woman slowly dropped the apron from her face, and, after looking hard at Arbell for a minute, she held out her arms towards her. Arbell immediately threw herself into them; and the old woman held her in close embrace for some time, patting her with one hand on the back, and

stroking her hair from time to time. She did not speak. At last she let go her hold, and rising from her seat, said,—

“God be thanked that we have found you at last. May you be as good as your mother, little one, and may you never be as unhappy. Master and I shall die happier now,—Little Arbell!” she exclaimed. “Ah! that was your mother’s name, when she was a child. You must be Miss Dudley with me, I can’t call *you* little Arbell. There can’t be more than one little Arbell to me. But, I’ll learn to love you, my darling, all the same, though you have got Captain Dudley’s eyes, instead of your blessed mother’s.”

“She must go now, Mrs. Braithwaite,” said Hannah, “they are waiting for her.”

“I’ll come again to-morrow, and every day while I stay here,” said Arbell, giving her little hand to the good old woman, “and you will talk to me about my dear mamma, will you?”

“Bless you, pretty one! that I will!” said the old woman, following her out of the kitchen. “I’ll just come and see you get on your pony.”

And Mrs. Braithwaite, who was accustomed to do just what she liked, walked with Arbell to the front door, and stood by while Mr. Casterton put her on the pony, and gave a pretty silver mounted whip into her hands.

“There, Mrs. Braithwaite,” said her master, good-naturedly, turning to her, “don’t you think she looks very well?”

“Yes! yes! master. She is well favoured enough, but I wish she were more rosy-like, she ain’t half what”—

“No,” interrupted Mr. Casterton, who feared

the good old woman was about to speak of Arbell's mother; and, as he thought that Arbell's feelings had been too much excited already that day, he turned the current of Mrs. Braithwaite's thoughts. "No, Mrs. Braithwaite, she would not do for a specimen of a Westmoreland girl at all; but I think we must contrive to fatten her up, and stretch her out a little, while she is here. No wonder she is so puny, she has never eaten porridge."

"Never eaten parraitch!" exclaimed Mrs. Braithwaite. "Why that must be a queer world out by Lunnon. Well! well! I've promised to make her some for supper to-night: ye'll be home by nine o'clock, will ye, Sir?"

"Yes; about that time, but I can't promise to a minute, for I've got a party of young people to deal with. Good bye."

"Good bye to ye all! Well, I do think this will add ten years to master's life!" she observed to James, who had been in attendance.

"Shouldn't wonder if it does!" remarked James. "Thae's two nice young ladies, any how! I shouldn't mind having them for nieces myself. Should you, Hannah?" he asked with a grin.

Hannah would not encourage what she considered a disrespectful way of speaking of his superiors, and told him "that she was only too happy to have such people to wait upon, and she thought he ought to be so, too."

"Well, for that matter, so I am," replied James. "I ain't such a fool as to fancy a man is any the worse off for being born a servant instead of a master. We can't all be masters, that's clear; and, as far as I can see, the higher one goes in the world, after one has got a comfort-

able living, the more trouble and worry one has: I don't think I'd change places with master to-morrow, if I could."

"Change places with your master, James!" said his mother. "Where is your head a-running to? Fine notions the young people of these days have. A pretty pickle the parish would be in if you was to change places with master!"

"For that matter, I might say, a pretty pickle the stables would be in if master was to change places with me!—No; we are all best in the places God put us in, if we only work well there."

"That's the wisest thing I've heard you say," said Hannah.

"I am glad you begin to like my conversation. Now, if you will put on your bonnet, as I ain't got anything particular to do, I'll just take you for a walk, and show you what a lake is like. Where have you lived, never to have seen a lake?"

"In a part of the country where there was none to see," retorted Hannah, laughing. But I've been in India, James! What do you think of that? Tell me when I have got my bonnet on."

And now we will overtake Mr. Casterton and the two girls, as they are cantering along the side of the fell. Arbell's curls are flying back in the wind, a colour is on her cheek, and she is laughing heartily at Uncle Stuart, who is telling them a droll story, in the Westmoreland dialect, which she seems to understand instinctively, but which Georgy says is as difficult to comprehend and to pronounce as a foreign language.

"And now tell me, where are we going?" asked Arbell.

"We are going to tea at Mr. St. John's, at the vicarage."

"Yes, I know that; but where are we going first? I overheard Georgy ask you to take us somewhere first."

"Ho! ho! your ears are sharp. It seems that Georgy does not wish to have an unfair advantage over you. She saw the view from High Street, this morning, and is very anxious that you should see it also, before you sleep, so we are going there first. Now, then, we must mount a little more slowly. We can't go on at this pace. The road is getting very steep."

As they proceeded at a foot-pace up the side of the mountain, Mr. Casterton pointed out the various objects of interest, as they became visible below them, one after another.

Now Arbell saw before her eyes some of the places she had heard mentioned so often during the past week. Mr. Casterton had many interesting tales and legends to tell, connected with almost every valley and mountain, lake and town, beck and quarry that they saw. How exhilarating was the fresh wind blowing on them at that elevation! The higher they went, the higher rose Arbell's spirits; and, afterwards, when she became quite accustomed to the mountains, she always declared that she felt her spirits rise in proportion to the increased elevation of the road; when at the tip-top of Skiddaw, Helvellyn, Coniston Old Man, and Black Comb, she felt happier than she could possibly be down in a valley.

"One feels so free up on those heights!" she said to Miss Travers, long afterwards. "Just as if the cares and troubles of this life never could

reach one there. Oh, it is a glorious thing to climb up to the top of such a mountain as High Street—the first I ever saw! I had no idea that we were so high. I did not know that Blacktarn itself is half way up one side of High Street. I had no time to ramble about that first day, you remember; so, when we reached the top, I was utterly astonished. You can see, very nearly, all the lake country from that point, and away across the Irish Sea, and Morecombe Bay. You can see, a long way off, Lancaster Castle, and Ingleborough (that is a great dumpy mountain in Yorkshire, which I never could admire the shape of, after Skiddaw and Blencathara, and the Langdale Pikes; or even after High Street and Harter Fell); and then the great mountains that reared themselves up all round, and the long ridges that seem all to meet at High Street. It was all like some great labyrinth of hills, among which the streams found their way as they could, and seemed to delight to linger and play among them, always stopping to make lakes and tarns of themselves as often as ever they could. I could not help fancying they liked the mountains better than the valleys, where they are thought so much of, and are hardly ever allowed to waste themselves in play, but are obliged to march on into the sea. I wish I could give you any idea of what you can see from that height! There are the lakes and tarns themselves. First, you can see nearly all Windermere. The islands in it look *such* little things! Then you can't *see* Brothers' Water, because it lies so deep down among the hills, but you can see where it is. Uncle Stuart told us the sad story about the two brothers who were drowned there. Then, you can

see Hays Water and Blea Water. They are such beautiful tarns. Then, Kidsty Pike shuts out Hawes Water, such a wild, beautiful little lake, with a forest half round it—Naddle Forest. They do give such queer, ugly names to some of the most beautiful places out in the north!—Naddle Forest—they might just as well call it *Noodle Forest* at once. Well, you can't see Hawes Water or Naddle Forest either, on account of that great Kidsty Pike (there's a name for a fine mountain!) which comes in the way. And then, again, you can't see Ullswater because there are two great fells—Place Fell and Hallin Fell, which just come in the way. Oh! Ullswater! Ullswater! If I begin to talk about *that*, I shall quite forget what I ought to be doing here. My darling, darling Ullswater! Give me the keys, Mrs. Vernon, and let me go and give out the clean towels for Aunt Harriet, or else I shall find my mind drowned in Ullswater, my favourite lake!—Let no one talk to me of Como or Maggiore,—of Superior or Ontario,—I mean to be faithful all my life to Ullswater, my first love among lakes." And away went Arbell with the keys, to fulfil her duties as deputy-housekeeper. This was when she was at the age of sixteen, more than two years after the period of which we were speaking just now, and to which we will return.

It was about five o'clock on Midsummer-day, 184—, when the two girls and their uncle stood on the top of the mountain in Westmoreland called the High Street, and looked down upon the scene, some points of which have been described in Arbell's reminiscence. Mr. Casterton, who was somewhat of an antiquarian, pointed out the direction in which the old Roman road ran, and Arbell had no diffi-

culty in tracing it. He talked to them in a way that they could both understand about the power and grandeur of ancient Rome, and told them many things which they did not know before about the improvements they had made in this country,—the towns and roads they constructed, the lands they cleared, and drained, and cultivated. Then he explained how it was that mountainous parts of the island, like Wales, and Westmoreland, and Cumberland, had never been subdued by them. The mountain passes were difficult to conquer, and the mountain land was too poor to be worth conquering, so they were left to the wild natives, who would not submit to be civilized. Arbell forgot to ask why, if the Romans did not much care about this barren moorland country, they had constructed a road in one of the most inaccessible parts of it.

To her great delight she found out that Mr. Casterton knew by heart a great deal of poetry about the lake country. As they were riding on the grass that now grows over that ancient road, she overheard him murmur to himself some lines beginning,—

“The massy ways, carried along these heights
By Roman perseverance, are destroyed
Or hidden underground, like sleeping rooms.”

She ventured to ask him to repeat them aloud. He did so; and when he concluded, she asked “Who wrote that?”

He replied, “Wordsworth. He is a poet with whom you will be well acquainted one day, I hope. With his works, I mean. With Mr. Wordsworth himself you are too young to become intimately acquainted; but you shall not leave this part of

the world without seeing him. You will be proud to say, some years hence, when he is in his grave, 'I saw Wordsworth once.' It is a noble sight, I can assure you. You think a fine lake or a fine mountain very well worth seeing, and so they are; but a fine poet—a glorious genius—a thoroughly good man, like William Wordsworth, is more worth seeing, to my mind. A great man is nobler than a great mountain."

"What sort of poetry does Mr. Wordsworth write?" asked Georgy.

"Poetry of a kind I once heard you say you do not like. Poetry that is all descriptions of places, and thoughts, and feelings."

"Then I am afraid, Uncle, I should love the mountain better than the poetry. Mind, I don't say better than the *poet*. If he is kind and good, and looks nice, and does not think himself too grand to speak a word to me, I should like him very much. Besides, I dare say he can tell us a good deal about the place where he lives. I remember, papa was telling some one the other day, that a beautiful lake—Grasmere, I think he said—was just by Mr. Wordsworth's house. Shall we go to see him? I know you know him, for papa said he was one of your oldest friends. Do take us soon."

Arbell was quite aghast at the easy, indifferent way in which Georgy spoke about a great poet, for although Arbell had read but very little of his writings, and those only minor poems, she knew that Wordsworth was a *great poet*; one whom Miss Travers and Mrs. Vernon always spoke of as if he were as great as Milton, she thought; but in that she was a little mistaken. Here was Georgy speak-

ing of him just as if he were no greater a person than Mr. Ford, the writing-master! Wondering whether he would speak to her, and thinking of making him useful in telling them what they wanted to know about Grasmere! How could Georgy be so at her ease? The fact was, Wordsworth was *not* a great man to Georgy. She knew and *could* know nothing of him, and as his greatness was a dead letter to her, "it would be all hypocrisy and nonsense," as she said to Arbell when they came to talk upon the subject afterwards, "if I were to be more full of respect for him than for any other of my uncle's friends. I can't understand why *you* speak of him in the manner you do." Arbell was a little pained when she heard Georgy talk in that way, because she felt that there was something wrong in the mind which had no reverence for superiority. She did not know that, in Georgy's case, it was *ignorance* which made her irreverent; as she grew older, she discovered that the more we know the more we learn to respect merit in others—for the simple reason that we can see it. Georgy knew nothing of Mr. Wordsworth's poetry, and cared little for any sort of poetry; therefore his name had no charm for her. She was not old enough to know the worldly value of celebrity, and therefore she cared nothing about it. This made her speak of the greatest living English poet as she would have spoken of any other gentleman her uncle proposed taking them to see. This was perfectly natural in Georgy. She was quite unaffected, but she was too matter of fact and practical to sympathize with Arbell in some things which to Arbell were of great importance.

She found that Mr. Casterton's conversation

elevated and gladdened her mind : he always found out what she knew of the subject they happened to be talking of, and generally added to it much that she wanted to know, and was quite capable of understanding. Then he had such a pleasant way of exciting their minds upon new subjects, and roused a desire to acquire information for themselves. Arbell thought that as her mother lived with him when she was a girl, she must have learned a great deal, as he seemed very ready to impart his information. She could not tell whether she loved or admired him most. As they descended from the High Street, she kept her pony close to his side, and listened to him and gazed at the prospect with equal pleasure. Suddenly, as they turned the corner of a great crag, on their descent, a small secluded valley, in which was a solitary house, met their view. Arbell stopped suddenly, and said, "That place looks as Robinson Crusoe's island must have looked, I fancy. There is a *house* there to be sure, but its inhabitants can have no communication with the rest of the world : I could believe we have just discovered it ; that no one ever saw it before." Mr. Casterton looked at her, and smiled. "At this distance, when we cannot see that the house is *not* a poor cottage, Wordsworth's beautiful description of a similar valley, not very far off, always seems to me to be very appropriate to the one before us :—

"Beneath our feet a little lowly vale—
A lowly vale, and yet uplifted high
Among the mountains ; even as if the spot
Had been from eldest time, by wish of theirs,
So placed to be shut out from all the world !
Urn-like it was in shape, deep as an urn ;

With rocks encompassed, save that to the south
Was one small opening, where a heath-clad ridge
Supplied a boundary less abrupt and close :
A quiet, treeless nook, with two green fields,
A liquid pool that glittered in the sun,
And one bare dwelling,—one abode, no more !
It seemed the home of poverty and toil,
Though not of want. The little fields made green
By husbandry of many thrifty years,
Paid cheerful tribute to the moorland house ;
There crows the cock, single in his domain.
The small birds find in spring no thicket there
To shroud them ; only from the neighbouring vales
The cuckoo, struggling up to the hill-tops,
Shouteth faint tidings of some gladder place.' "

" How beautiful ! The poetry is just like the place itself," said Arbell.

" Yes ; that is very nice and easy to understand, though it is nothing but a description of a little valley. *I like that* poetry," said Georgy.

" But you would not have liked that poetry yesterday," said her uncle, " because it would have conveyed no idea, no truth, to your mind. To-morrow, perhaps, you may learn to appreciate some other poetical passage which would be a dead letter to you to-day. Thus you may become a real lover of poetry in time. A taste for poetry is worth cultivating, I assure you. But I think I can make the lines I have just recited seem more beautiful still. Look again at that 'little lowly vale ;' are you sure you have never seen it before ? Are you quite sure, Arbell, you can see nothing by which you can conjecture that the inhabitants of that house hold communion with the outer world ? For instance, would you venture to assert that there are not two young ladies from London on a visit there now, and that those two young ladies are not

riding on ponies over High Street at this precise moment?"

"Why, Arbell, how stupid we have been! Don't you see that it is Blacktarn Vale, and that *that* is my uncle's house? How very different things look at a distance! What was said in the poetry about its being a *poor* house is the only thing that is not quite true!"

Arbell was very much astonished, as you may suppose, to find that the little vale which she thought looked as if it had never been discovered before, was the one she had slept in the previous night. She thought it the most attractive, or, as she said, *nicest* place she had ever seen; and as they wound along the side of the Fell, on their road to the village, she watched that little valley unfold, each moment, some new beauty. Soon the beck and the waterfall became visible; and then a fine plantation of fir trees near the house: presently she saw the road, and then she could distinguish the orchard and flower-garden. When they had rounded the shoulder of another crag, they lost sight of Blacktarn Vale; and the village, scattered in a most irregular fashion, over a small plain, at the foot of Blacktarn Fell, was spread out before them. Georgy was engaged in wondering which was the vicarage; when suddenly Arbell lifted her whip, and pointing to a neighbouring height, which seemed on a level with the ground on which they stood, said,—"I saw those two great towers last night. I think that is Glenara Castle, is it not?"

"Yes, my dear," replied Mr. Casterton, "and all the land from this spot to the Castle belongs to the Glenara estate: the village of Blacktarn included."

Arbell gazed at the Castle with peculiar interest. She felt glad that so noble an abode belonged to her family: she could not help feeling a thrill of pleasure at the thought that she was not born of low or poor parents. Arbell had some weak pride, mixed with a laudable admiration for the attributes of greatness. It was a good thing for her that she had not been brought up by General Dudley, in all the silly pride of ignorance and petty grandeur; she would not have been able to recognise any worth but that of wealth and station. Her pride was now of a comparatively harmless kind. She thought that it would become her, as the descendant of the lords of Glenara, to be better, in every way, than persons whose station was less elevated. "If I am *a lady* by birth, I will never do anything to disgrace my condition," she thought. They rode on a little way, and presently a gentleman overtook them. It was Mr. St. John, who was introduced to them by their uncle. "I have had you in sight this last ten minutes," he observed, as he joined them. "How have you enjoyed your ride, young ladies?" Georgy replied that they had enjoyed it very much; and then, seeing that her Uncle and Mr. St. John were beginning to converse on parish matters, she made a sign to Arbell to let the two gentlemen go first, while they followed at a distance which would prevent their conversation from being overheard. Arbell and Georgy, like most young lady friends, had a great deal to say when they got together. On the present occasion, there was no lack of interesting matter; but I can only find room for a small portion of their conversation. After they had talked a good deal about Glenara Castle and General Dudley, they were silent for

some time, after which the following conversation took place :—

“ What a strange-looking little man ! ” observed Georgy, glancing at Mr. St. John.

“ I rather like his face,” said Arbell, “ he looks so good and happy. He is very oddly dressed, certainly. That coat looks as if it had been made for a larger person ; and how very badly he rides. He does not look much like a *gentleman*. ”

“ Not like the gentlemen we are accustomed to see near London ; but I dare say the people about here don’t think much of the fashion—at least the gentlemen do not, if we may judge of that specimen on before, who *is* a gentleman, I am sure, for all his queer look. Now I remember, Julia St. John asked me what was the newest fashion in sleeves, and whether ladies in London wear their skirts plaited or gathered.”

“ What sort of a girl is she ? Did you have much talk with her ? ” asked Arbell.

“ Yes, we were a long time together this morning—she, and I, and the boys.”

“ Which of them did you like the best ? ” asked Arbell.

“ Oh ! Cuthbert St. John, decidedly. He is the oldest and the cleverest, and every way the nicest. He talked to me all the time.”

“ I thought one of the Bartons (I forgot his name, but it was not the one with very light hair) had a nice sort of face. I thought he was like somebody we know.”

“ Oh, yes. You mean Mrs. Vernon. I saw that likeness at once. I wonder whether he is any relation to her ; I’ll ask him. He is a nice boy, only he is too silent. He is Oswald Barton. The fair

one is Laurence—‘Lazy Laurence’ they call him, and I dare say he deserves it.”

“Give a dog an ill name and hang him!” said Arbell, laughing. “What is Julia like?—she is a pretty, lively girl, I can see.”

“She is *lively* enough,” said Georgy. “I did not think whether she was pretty or not. She and her brother Cuthbert are not at all alike, but they are both clever, in different ways.—I should not be surprised if you like Julia best. She seemed to like the look of you, and asked if you were not very *gentle*. I said you were generally gentle, but that when you were provoked you were anything *but*. She said, ‘Then, you would just suit her.’ When they heard that your name was Dudley, she and Cuthbert were very anxious to know if you belonged to the Glenara Dudleys; and when I said you were General Dudley’s grand-daughter, I thought they would have killed me with questions. But I did not know whether my Uncle or you wished to have the matter spoken about, so I told them what was the truth—that I knew positively no more than that you were Captain Dudley’s daughter, and that you were my schoolfellow and dearest friend. I said it was very likely they would know all they wished to learn before we left Blacktarn.—See! There they come! Julia said that those boys spend half their lives in walking and riding over the fells. The rest of the time they are studying with Mr. St. John. The two Bartons are his pupils; but I fancy Cuthbert is the cleverest of the three. He is almost sixteen. Oswald is fifteen, and Laurence fourteen; Julia is fifteen. Oh! Laurence is a little deaf, so it’s no easy matter to talk to him. There now, I think you know all that is necessary.”

The three lads first spoke to Mr. St. John and Mr. Casterton, and then they passed on to the two girls.

"How very late you are, Miss Casterton! It is nearly six o'clock," said Cuthbert. "My mother and Julia are alarmed at such fashionable hours. It is customary here for young ladies who go out to tea to arrive at about four o'clock, and bring a portion of needlework to do before that meal. I do not see your work-baskets, young ladies," he added, smiling. "Perhaps you trusted to my mother's Poor-clothes' box to supply you with finger work when you came."

"We thought of nothing of the kind," said Georgy. "And I beg you will not put such an idea into Mrs. St. John's head. I am not fond of doing needlework when I go out to spend the evening, and my friend Arbell loathes the sight of a needle at any time."

"Don't say that before my mother," Cuthbert said, with much gravity. "She is always talking of the dreadful deterioration of the present race of young ladies in the matter of sewing. If you who are fresh from a London school, declare you hate a needle, she will think it is all over with the rising generation. If you and Miss Dudley can make a shirt, and a gown and petticoat, she will honour the system of education which prevails in Eastgate House; otherwise—"

"How can you talk such nonsense, Cuthbert?" said Oswald. "Miss Casterton, let me explain to you that this speech of his is entirely satirical—caused by the fact that Mrs. St. John is just now very much interested in teaching the village girls to sew; and that she said, at dinner-time, she

should try and enlist you to help Julia and herself at the school." Having said this, Oswald walked on as before, with his head cast down and his hands in his pocket. Arbell thought, as she had thought before, that he had a sincere and noble expression of face, though his manner was not so polished as that of Cuthbert, or his tone of voice so pleasant.

"You are given to exaggeration, I perceive," said Georgy to Cuthbert.

"And sometimes to invention, it seems," said Arbell to Laurence, who was walking close beside her, and whose deafness she forgot.

"Invention!" exclaimed he, looking up with a bright, pleased look. "I shall be very happy to show it to you. Mr. St. John says it will be of great use if we can get a blacksmith to make it properly. This is only a model. I suppose you have seen the new Patent Irrigator upon which this is an improvement?" and he looked eagerly in her face.

Arbell looked very blank, as if she thought Master Laurence was more insane than lazy. Oswald came to her assistance.

"My cousin misunderstood you. His mind is, at present, intent on a machine which he has lately invented, and your use of the word 'invention' opened his heart." Then he added, in an undertone, "It will not bother you very much, and it will please him to let him show you his model, and explain it to you. Poor Laurence! It is a good thing for him he is so fond of mechanics, because he loses interest in conversation. Naturally enough, when he hears only half of it."

Laurence, who saw that Oswald was talking about

him, and having a perfect faith in the *good nature* of his cousin, was not at all suspicious, though he could not hear what he said. He knew, by experience, that Oswald was not saying anything about him which it would be painful for him to hear. Arbell noticed the trustful affection of Laurence's face as he looked at Oswald, and the real admiration which beamed in Oswald's—admiration mixed with a sort of loving pity—for Laurence. She felt sure that they were friends.

She raised her voice in hopes of making Laurence hear, and succeeded perfectly.

"I have never seen any irrigating machine; but if you will show me your model, and explain it to me, perhaps I might be able to understand it."

"Understand it!" Laurence exclaimed. "Oh, any one can understand it—even Julia, who hardly knows a lever from a wedge. I think you look as if you were mechanical," he said, examining her face. "I suppose you know something of geometry; most girls do, now. Julia ought; but we can't get her to look at a problem."

Arbell regretted that she knew very little of geometry; that she had only gone through the first book of Euclid. "Georgy," she said, "was very fond both of geometry and arithmetic; and I think she likes all sorts of mechanical contrivances. Perhaps she may have seen the patent machine you spoke of just now. Her father and brothers sometimes take her to the Polytechnic, and such places."

"I'll ask her," said Laurence, and he stepped on to where Georgy rode, with Cuthbert walking by her side. Laurence's step was anything but inactive, then. His mind was awake.

"You will excuse my cousin, Miss Dudley," said Oswald. "He is quite a genius in his way! He meant to pay you a compliment when he said 'you look as if you were mechanical.' What do you think of that, now?" he said, stopping suddenly, and pointing to a house at a little distance. "That is Blacktarn vicarage, where we all live. Is it not picturesque? I am never tired of making sketches of this house and the village. See how snugly the village nestles in that great fold of the skirt of the mountain. Then, how simple and majestic are the opposite fells. But the vicarage, and the old church, and the ruined grange, as they stand grouped together under the shelter of that crag, make the best picture hereabouts."

"Oh, not more beautiful than Blacktarn Valley, as we have just seen it from High Street, and not more beautiful than Glenara Castle looks from this very point," said Arbell, with animation, for she was really fond of drawing, and was beginning to sketch tolerably.

Oswald cared more for pictures and scenery than for most things, except poetry; and in the course of five minutes he found that Arbell and he should get on well together. This made him brighten up wonderfully. He had been six months at Blacktarn, and during all that time he had found no one to sympathize with him in his love for poetry and painting, except Mr. Casterton, with whom he could not converse freely, as he was an old gentleman, and he did not see him often enough to become intimate with him.

Once Arbell's pony stumbled, and then Oswald took his hands from his pocket, lifted up his head, seized the bridle, and led him carefully down the

rough descent to the vicarage. They were both talking, with animation, about "The Bridal of Triermain," when they stopped at the gate of the vicarage. The others had all arrived before them, and Julia, in a white muslin dress and blue sash, was standing in the gateway, waiting Arbell's descent from the pony.

"That's the first time I ever saw Oswald give himself any trouble about a young lady," said Cuthbert to Georgy, with a smile. "What can be the reason of it? Stay, did I not hear the word *Scott* from Miss Dudley. Does she chance to be fond of poetry?"

"Arbell fond of poetry!" echoed Georgy. "She likes it better than anything."

"Then she is safe for a good lot of it from Oswald Barton. He'll dose her well. He is quite a poet. Goes about among the mountains with a sketch book and a pencil, and makes a picture and a bit of poetry about every furze-bush and pebble he finds. Oh! he's a queer chap, is Oswald; and not a bad fellow in the main. I hope Miss Dudley is a real good-natured girl, and wont mind his plaguing her with drawings, and poetry, and such stuff."

"She will like it of all things. I'm sure she and Master Oswald will do well together."

They were now near the hall door, and Arbell was looking, with an admiring eye, along the irregular, extensive old house. It was only one story in height, built of stone, and half covered with ivy and other creepers. It had a homely, ancient look, very different from the substantial elegance of Mr. Casterton's mansion. There was a quaint, old-fashioned garden in front, with yews,

and other evergreens, cut into various shapes—cones and globes, dragons and peacocks. There was a small sunny lawn, at one extremity of which was a row of fourteen bee-hives, which Julia pointed out as her especial charge.

Arbell asked “If she were not afraid of being stung?”

Julia was quite amused at the question, and asked “Why she should be afraid of being stung?”

“Oh!” said Arbell, “because bees do sting sometimes.”

“Yes, and ponies fall down sometimes,” said Julia, laughing, “but when one is used to ponies it does not make us afraid to ride: so it is with bees, when you are used to them you would never think of their sting. I never was stung, and I do not mind going close to the hives, and letting the bees settle upon me. How do you like those flower-beds? Roses and lilies in that one, you see,—that is my special bed: that one with the arbutus in the middle and the larkspurs and sweetwilliams round it, is Cuthbert’s: Laurence takes all that border to himself—does it not do him credit?—convolvulus, sweetpeas, honeysuckle, clematis, jessamine—he *will* have all those sweet climbing plants along that side, because it is papa’s favourite walk, and Laurence is very fond of papa. Oswald?—Oh! he don’t care for a garden. Yes! that’s *our* peacock! He looks proud enough on the wall there. I think we must go in to mamma now.”

And Arbell and Georgy, whom Julia had taken round the garden, now returned to the house. Here the two former were destined to meet with an unexpected recognition. Mrs. St. John was the very lady who had so kindly befriended Arbell

at the Kendal Station the day before. She was a pleasant, lively woman, and she made them all laugh heartily with her account of the disconsolate way in which she found Arbell seated on her box. This story brought forth a conversation about the time when railroads were undreamed of, and when it would have taken a week to travel from London to Blacktarn. Then Arbell and Georgy went up stairs with Julia to take off their hats; and, at their request, Julia showed them all the rooms of the house—some of which amused and pleased them mightily. There were two steps up into one, and three steps down into another—some were very narrow, and some were very wide—some had sloping floors and no fire-places, and all had lattice windows, which looked out on the garden and over it away to the mountains.

"What a charming old place!" exclaimed Arbell.

"Do you really like it?" said Julia. "I am so glad, because *I* do. I was born here, and have hardly ever slept away from home in my life. But I felt afraid that you, who have seen much better and more modern houses, might not like the old-fashioned style of this."

"Yes, we do," said Georgy; "perhaps you don't know that the newest fashion now is to admire old-fashioned houses and furniture. Now, *I* do not like them except in their proper places. I should not admire this house in Piccadilly, but I think it is quite beautiful here. How slippery these polished stairs are! Mind how you come, Arbell! Don't go jumping down in your usual careless way."

When they entered the drawing-room, there seemed to be quite a large party. Besides the

persons already known to the reader, there were one or two ladies and gentlemen from the neighbourhood, who were extremely anxious to see Mr. Casterton after his visit to London, and to hear his account of what he saw and heard in that wonderful place. Arbell liked the fashion of taking tea at Mrs. St. John's. People did not sit anywhere about the room, as they did whenever she had been at a tea-party in or near London; and, instead of having servants to bring in tea on trays, which they carry about to each guest to help himself, Mrs. St. John sat at the head of a large table, and requested the company to seat themselves round it. This they all did very readily and without bustle or confusion, and without any stoppage to the conversation.

The young people got together at one end, and were very merry. Arbell noted this meal with some astonishment. In the first place, she was a little surprised to see a clean white table-cloth spread, exactly as if for dinner. A tray with a tea apparatus was at one end, over which Julia presided. At the other end was a larger tray, with coffee and chocolate. Arbell observed that most persons preferred coffee. Mr. Casterton took chocolate, and seeing that he did so, she did the same, as she did not like to ask for milk. She was quite astonished at the quantity and variety of the good things to eat which covered the table. She enumerated, in a letter to Mrs. Vernon, ten different kinds of cakes, hot and cold, besides various sorts of bread. Then there were four or five sorts of preserves, and plates of tongue and ham, boiled eggs, some cream-cheese and radishes, and a great pigeon-pie. As she observed, "Aunt Harriet had

not exaggerated in her account of a north-country tea." She said that she "liked it a great deal better than a late dinner." Every one seemed to enjoy this meal, and there was a great deal of merriment, and some really interesting and instructive conversation. After tea, the younger portion of the company retired to the garden, where they walked about and talked of many things. Presently Oswald reminded Arbell of her promise to see Laurence's model machine. "He has just gone to set it in order, and I promised to bring you and Miss Casterton to look at it in five minutes."

"Are you going to let Laurence bore you with that stupid machine of his?" asked Cuthbert, who wanted to take the girls into the church.

"It would not bore us at all," said Georgy. "At least I wish very much to see it. I am very fond of ingenious machines, and, from what he told me of this before tea, I fancy it is very interesting."

"A singular taste for a young lady!" observed Cuthbert, rather satirically.

"One would not be common in one's tastes, you know," said Georgy, who was always glad to show a satirical person that she did not mind satire. "I prefer looking at clever machines, and helping to make them, too, to looking at stuffed birds and dried butterflies, or making a crochet collar. Don't you, Arbell?"

"I like anything better than making a crochet collar," said Arbell.

"Do you dislike plain hemming and sewing?" asked Julia, rather anxiously. After what she had heard about Mrs. St. John's village working-class,

Arbell felt very much inclined to conceal her real distaste for needle-work, in order to please her new acquaintances ; but her sense of right gained the mastery, and she said, "To tell you the truth, Miss St. John——"

"Oh ! call me Julia. I hate to be called Miss St. John. It is so formal."

"But ought we not to be formal, instead of too familiar, on a first acquaintance ?—I have been told so," said Arbell. "However, if you wish it, I will say *Julia*. The truth is, I am not fond of needle-work, and work very badly. Still, I can hem and sew tolerably, and if your mamma thinks I can be of any use in her working-class, I shall be very glad to help her during the short time I am here. And so will Georgy, I am sure ; and she is very clever with her needle."

"Yes, dear, clever beside you and most of our girls. You know Madame's favourite proverb, 'Dans le pays des aveugles les borgnes sont rois.'"

"Treason ! treason !" shouted Cuthbert ; "Miss Casterton taken in the fact of quoting a papistical and unknown tongue ! Let us have the benefit of that sentiment in plain English. Can you tell us what it means, Julia ?"

"No, I am afraid not—if it had been in Latin, now——"

"Miss Dudley, will you explain the meaning of those mysterious vocables ?"

"It means, that 'In a country of blind men, the one-eyed men are kings ;' but, Julia, this proverb does not apply. Georgy is seized with an unusually modest fit. She is a very good worker for a girl of her age. She is fond of work, and she made me learn to do even the little I can, because she

says it is a very stupid thing for a woman not to know how to do all sorts of needlework. Oh, Georgy is very prudent and practical you will find. She keeps me safe on my feet very often, when I should be walking in the clouds."

"I hope she will exercise her power now," said Oswald, laughing, "and keep you from wandering away from the principles of mechanics, for we must go to Laurence."

They all repaired to a little closet, which served as Laurence's workshop. Here he exhibited a very interesting, because a really clever, machine for irrigating large portions of land. The model was very easy to understand, and the girls worked it easily under his direction. After seeing the machine, they all went to scramble about the ruins of the old Grange, where they disturbed a great many owls and bats. Then Cuthbert got the keys of the church, and they went to examine it. Here Arbell's attention was absorbed in the monuments of the Dudleys, of which there were six, the earliest bearing the date 1604. Oswald was able to tell her many stories and traditions of the Dudley family. He was quite surprised at her ignorance of the history of her own family. She accounted for it simply by saying—

"There has been some unfortunate dissensions in our family, and I have been brought up among strangers."

"But you are the direct heiress of Glenara," said he. "You will in all probability be adopted by the General as his heiress. You ought to begin and study the Dudley archives directly. I would, I know, if I could boast of such a descent. But alas ! my grandfather was a Manchester cotton-

spinner, who became a great manufacturer. The heiress of Glenara ought to know the traditions of Glenara."

Oswald touched Arbell on her weak point; she blushed with pleasure as she heard the words "heiress of Glenara;" but she thought of the kind generous friend of her infancy, and stifled the feeling.

"I do not think I shall ever be 'heiress of Glenara,'" she said; but that is no reason why I should not know any interesting stories about my family."

Oswald could not understand her manner and look, but he complied with her wish, and was in the midst of the story of the ghost that haunts the west tower at Glenara when Mr. Casterton came to bid her "get her hat, as they must go home immediately."

CHAPTER VIII.

ULLSWATER AND HELVELLYN.

“ Like a fair sister of the sky,
 Unruffled doth the blue lake lie,
 The mountains looking on.”

WORDSWORTH.

THE next morning the two girls rose early. Arbell was dressed, and knocked at Georgy's door before six o'clock, and was glad to find her ready to go out. They had heard, the night before, that it was their uncle's custom to assemble all the family to prayers at half-past six o'clock.

“ We shall have a good hour and a half before breakfast !” exclaimed Georgy, as they went down stairs. “ And see what Hannah or Mrs. Braithwaite has done ! That plate of biscuits, and those glasses of milk on the hall table are for us, I am sure. Drink that new milk, it will make you quite strong, Arbell, and eat a biscuit. Do as I tell you !” she added, playfully, as Arbell seemed inclined to disobey.

“ Now then, where shall we go ?” said Arbell—

“ ‘The world is all before us where to choose.’ ”

“ Let us climb up the side of the waterfall. We must go across that piece of grass—*moor*, I mean—

and half-way round the tarn, and then we can get over the beck very well."

"A very good idea. If we are tolerable climbers we can get up to the top of the fall and look down on it. I dare say the house looks very pretty from that point."

Away they went, half-running, and singing a duet, (I forgot to tell you before that they sang duets together very prettily.) When they got near the edge of the tarn, they stopped to look down into the dark, deep water, and Arbell began to tell a story, which she said *might* be true, about a young girl being drowned in this very tarn, when Georgy begged her not to make them melancholy with her sad inventions then, but to reserve that story for a winter evening at school. She then turned the conversation upon their new friends at the vicarage. They both agreed that Julia was a nice girl. About the boys they differed a little. Georgy liked Cuthbert, and saw little to like in the others. Arbell liked them all three, but preferred Oswald, decidedly. When they came to the beck, they found it not quite so easy to cross as they had imagined. It made so much noise in dashing over the rocks, and rattling the great stones in its course, that they found it impossible to keep up anything like conversation, and so each one went on singing to herself, as long as she could, but without overcoming the louder music of the beck. At last they found a place by which they could cross without much danger of wetting their feet; the rocks forming natural stepping stones. When they were on the other side, they began to ascend the great rocks, over which the water fell from a considerable height. Arbell was in ecstasy. To be close to a



Crossing the Beck.

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cascade, so close that the spray washed her face, was an intense pleasure! She scrambled nimbly over the wet rocks, and when she reached the top sat down in triumph, and watched Georgy, who soon joined her. They were both wet; but in the highest spirits.

"Is not this better than anything we could have fancied, Georgy? Look at this beautiful waterfall, dancing and tumbling, and roaring away below us—*Blacktarn Force*, they call it, Oswald Barton says. It is a very small one. Think what Lowdore, and Stock Ghill Force, and Airey Force, and the two Rydal Falls must be! Well, I feel as if I should be contented if we were to see no more than we have seen now! It would be quite enough to carry back to London in our minds."

"I do not agree with you *quite*. I confess that I am very eager to go and see all those places Uncle spoke of last night. I know he means to show us all that he can. He was arranging a party to make a tour with the St. Johns last night, I know. They mentioned Windermere and Rydal, Furness Abbey and Morecombe Bay, and Black Comb. Now, you being a geographer, know where those places are, but I am in a beautiful state of ignorance. Then, I know we are to see Lowther Castle, and Brougham Castle, and King Arthur's Round Table, and Long Meg and her Daughters (they are Druidical remains, I know). Mr. St. John said something about going to Kirby Lonsdale—that sounds as if it were a pretty place; and then he said something about Ingleborough, and the stalactite caverns. I pricked up my ears at that, you may be sure. And I heard a long talk about a new cave lately discovered, larger than any yet known, somewhere under

Ingleborough, I think they said. Indeed, as well as I could make out, all the stalactite caves were in Ingleborough ; so I suppose that is an extensive mountain."

"I believe it is," said Arbell. "Look yonder ! See, they are hoisting a flag at Glenara. What can that be for, I wonder ?"

"Because the heiress has arrived, perhaps," said Georgy. "Really, now I come to think of it, it is a fine thing to be Lady of the Castle."

"You seem to forget that I am not likely ever to be Lady of the Castle, as you call it. My grandfather never forgave my father's marriage, and you, yourself, saw how he received the unexpected news that his grandchild was alive. He can leave his castle and estate to any one he pleases, Mr. Caster-ton says. Now, I am the last person he will think of leaving it to."

"Well ! I do not think so ; nor more does Hannah. She firmly expects to hear that General Dudley has sent for you to adopt ; and then you will go and live at Glenara Castle in great grandeur and state."

Arbell looked at her for a moment.

"You seem to suppose that I can throw off all love to old friends and adopt new ones with the greatest ease. No, Georgy ! Think a moment, and you will see that I must be very ungrateful, and very easily caught with what the catechism calls 'the pomps and vanities' of this world, if I can leave Miss Travers just because a rich old gentleman takes a fancy to have me in his house, and to leave me his property."

"But," said Georgy, "when the rich old gentleman is your grandfather!"

"A grandfather who has never taken the trouble to find out whether I was alive or dead. A grandfather who never treated my mother properly," said Arbell, warmly.

"You are a strange girl, Arbell," said Georgy. "I should have thought that nothing would please you so much as to find some of your relations; especially if they turned out to be people of station and education. You have often longed to know some one belonging to you."

"Yes, dear; and this shows me the truth which I have often read in books. When we have longed for a thing till we at last give up all hope of having it—it is given to us; and when it is given to us, there is something in it which prevents its being as delightful to us as we thought it would be. Do you remember reading Miss Jane Taylor's 'Party of Pleasure?' I hope things will not be all through life just like that. To get what we want, but never *when* we want it; and when it comes, to find it different from what we expected."

"That may be all true," said Georgy; "but, for my part, I think things are not so very bad for you, now that you *have* discovered your relations. You might have had a worse uncle than Uncle Stuart, and a worse cousin than me;" and she smiled.

"Yes, indeed, when I think of *that* side of my relationship, I am, indeed, happy; but then, when I think of my poor dear mamma's unhappiness, and the unhappiness she caused (for Uncle Stuart says her parents were as angry that she married my father, as General Dudley was that his son married my mother)—when I think of all *that*, it makes me wretched. Again, when I think of the melan-

choly life my grandfather must have led there, in that old castle, with no one to talk to him, or nurse him, I am unhappy."

"But Hannah feels quite sure that he will want to take you to live with him, very soon. She told me that a servant rode over with a letter to Uncle from General Dudley yesterday; and she was sure the letter was about you. Oh! depend upon it, you are not doomed to drag on many more years in a school! "You will be the Lady of the Castle very soon: Cuthbert and Julia are quite sanguine on the subject. Do not be uneasy!—Miss Dudley, of Glenara Castle, will soon be installed in all her rights; and I, poor Georgy Casterton, will have to go back to Eastgate House without you."

"You forget, Georgy, that there is such a feeling as gratitude. What should I deserve if I could forget, for one moment, my duty to Miss Travers? She has been as a mother to me; and her will I obey before any new found relation. She will not wish to part with me, I know!—she loves me, and I love her! I will not be separated from her!"

"But, Arbell," said Georgy—"I think if your grandfather wished to have you under his care, the law could force you to go: I am not *sure*; but I think it could."

"Yes," said Arbell,—"the law is on his side, I am told. But I do *not* think he would *force* me to go to live with him."

"But," said Georgy, still puzzled, "surely you would prefer not being dependent on a stranger any longer."

"Aunt Harriet is not *a stranger*! She is more to me than my own relations! Oh! if you could tell, Georgy, what I feel for her, you would not be

surprised that, much as I should like to come and live in such a beautiful place as this, I could not be happy away from her! But there is, as yet, no chance of my being asked to do so. If I am sent for by my grandfather, I shall tell Uncle Stuart all that is in my mind; and he will tell me what I ought to do."

"Why not Miss Travers?" asked Georgy,— "surely she is the proper person for you to consult."

"Not in this case," replied Arbell. "She forgets herself. She would do what she thought would be most to my advantage, without regard to her own feelings. I do not want her to know that General Dudley wishes to acknowledge me, and then she will not know that I have had anything to give up."

"Oh! then you acknowledge that there would be something for you to *give up*," said Georgy.— "I *thought* your own lawful relations and your proper home would have attractions for you: I am sure they would have for me! It is so sad to belong to nobody. I have always felt *that* for you, dear, though I never liked you to know it, because it could do you no good."

"Georgy, dear," said Arbell, "I always saw through your tricks, when you used to pretend that having a great many relations was much worse than having none. I confess to you, honestly, that if things were quite different from what they are—if I could have you, and Aunt Harriet, and Mrs. Vernon, to live with me at that old Castle yonder (see how beautiful it looks now, with the sun shining on it, and the great flag waving in the wind), I should be quite happy. Of course, I would

ten thousand times rather live at that fine old place than at Eastgate House (though I love *that* too), because it is the place where my ancestors lived ; and it is full of old historical associations, and is grand and beautiful—and I love grandeur and beauty so much ! I might be of great use in the village, and among all the people round about ; and I might make my grandfather happier, perhaps ; and I should see dear Uncle Stuart constantly, and live, always live, in the midst of these glorious mountains ! Ah ! that would be a happy life, indeed !—But that cannot be.”

“ Why no ! ” said Georgy, “ I don’t see that it could, unless we were to meet with a very benevolent fairy in these strange parts. Papa and mamma want *me* ; Eastgate House and all the girls want Miss Travers and Mrs. Vernon ; and, as yet, we do not know that your grandfather wants *you*. So it is best not to trouble ourselves about it at all.”

“ That is what I feel sure of ! ” said Arbell. “ Why need we worry ourselves with thinking about what we cannot help ; especially when we *know* that God orders all things better for us than we can order them ? ”

Arbell paused. She seldom made use of the name of God in her ordinary talk. Miss Travers believed that a habit of quoting scripture, and speaking of God on every trifling occasion, tended to lessen rather than to increase the feeling of love and reverence towards Him. “ Religion, my dear,” she said one day to Arbell, “ is a strong deep feeling that binds our hearts to God. It should rule our conduct, but should not be made a subject of frequent conversation. Like every other deep affec-

tion of our nature, it should not be dragged into every-day chatter. When people, young or old, are always talking about their feelings to every acquaintance, even for human beings, we feel that those feelings cannot be very deep—we have a painful sense of a want of delicacy and real affection in them; but when the feeling constantly paraded is *religion*, that secret love and trust in the Most High God, who is to us more than a Father; then, indeed, we cannot help thinking that there is something worse than indelicate,—something profane and shocking in it. If you were always talking to others of your love to me, I should know that you were not very deeply affectionate towards me. So, when people are always using God's name in conversation, and are always talking of their religious feeling, I cannot believe that they love Him aright."

Thus it was, when Arbell found that in the seriousness of conversation with Georgy, she had been led to speak of God, she suddenly ceased speaking. Georgy understood her feeling well enough, and after exchanging a glance with her friend, she replied,—

"Yes, that is good to remember: God orders all things for the best. I should think it must be nearly half-past six now. Let us go, Arbell. I hope that things will be so ordered that you and I shall always be friends!" and kissing each other affectionately, they rose from their mossy seat, and began to get down the side of the fall.

They were just in time to wish their uncle good morning, and take off their wet shoes and frocks before prayers. They spent the morning in walking to the village with Mr. Casterton, and came home

full of the poor villagers and their concerns. They had met Mrs. St. John at the school ; and, at their uncle's suggestion, proposed that Hannah, who had offered herself willingly for the task, should go for two hours, every day, to instruct the elder girls in needlework. Hannah was an excellent needle-woman ; and Mrs. St. John, who knew, by experience in the parish, what an important thing it is for a labourer's wife or daughter to be ready with her needle, was delighted to have so competent an assistant. Her great difficulty was to get teachers. All the ladies of the parish lived too far off to be able to attend regularly. Arbell and Georgy had both a strong desire to be useful, and they entered into a plan to go with Hannah to the village whenever their uncle could spare them, and teach some of the little girls to sew.

"I have heard Mrs. Vernon say that we may learn things ourselves by teaching others," said Arbell, laughing,—"so it is to be hoped, that if I teach little Susan and Jane Miles how to make a frock, I may learn how to make one myself." Mrs. St. John told them that Julia and the boys were going to ride over to see them in the afternoon, and to arrange with their uncle about spending the whole of the two next days on the banks of Ullswater, with their family.

"How delightful!" exclaimed Arbell.

And it was delightful, I can assure you, my dear readers. None of the party ever forgot that memorable party to Ullswater. It was no wonder that Arbell loved that lake the best of all those she saw. Besides being, on the whole, the finest of the English Lakes, everything conspired to make Ullswater seem to her the loveliest spot she ever

beheld. The weather was perfect for such an expedition. There was no rain or fear of rain. The sun shone, but the heat was not overpowering. The company was well suited to each other, and contained a pleasant mixture of grown-up persons, and "persons who were still growing up—not *children*," as Cuthbert St. John said, laughingly, looking at Arbell,—“for though you are the youngest of the party, and so very little as to make Julia seem a giantess, yet we all know that young ladies of fourteen are not children.”

The party consisted of the St. Johns, four; the Bartons, six; and Mr. Casterton and two girls, nine. They all rose very early on the appointed morning, and rode together, over the fells, into Patterdale, to breakfast at the inn there. Arbell and Georgy were extremely surprised to find such an inn in such a place. It was like a regular London hotel in its arrangements, without the noise and bustle, and looked out upon the finest mountain and lake scenery that is to be found in England. Arbell was at first rather disappointed at the sight of the grand-looking inn.

"So out of character with the rest of the place!" she observed, to Oswald: who said, "You won't say *that* when you sit down to breakfast, if you have as good an appetite as I have! They give you a famous good breakfast, I can tell you, at this inn."

"If it is not quite ready, could we not just go down to the edge of the water? I do so long to be there! How beautiful it looks!"

"Away with you, then!" said Mr. St. John. "Make haste back!" and Arbell, Georgy, Cuthbert, and Oswald, galloped away down to the edge of the

lake. It was no easy thing to get the two girls away again.

"Oh, never mind breakfast!" they said; and they could scarcely be persuaded that all those grand towering mountains, and that crystal clear lake, would all keep firm and fast until they had eaten some breakfast. Oswald, indeed, was willing enough to remain with the girls; but Cuthbert said, "Much as he admired Ullswater, it did not deprive him of his reason. Breakfast was waiting; and he was not romantic enough to live like chameleons and London young ladies—on air. Besides, he thought his mother would expect them back immediately."

This last consideration had its weight with Georgy, who whispered to Arbell, "We had better go now! We need not be long at breakfast."

And they were not long. Oswald and the two girls rose before the rest of the company, and asked to be allowed to look about them till the others were ready to go. Cuthbert called them "the romantic trio;" and said, "he had not half finished his breakfast." Julia and Laurence, too, did not seem to have finished; but Arbell declared, "she could wait no longer;" and having obtained permission, they ran away out in sight of that delicious lake once more. Oswald ran back to the inn for a moment. When he returned he was smiling significantly to himself.

"What are you so pleased at?" asked Arbell.

"Oh, you will know all in good time. I just went to tell Cuthbert we should be in the chapel-yard when they want us. I know you would like to see Charles Gough's grave."

"Perhaps we should, if we happened to know who he was!" said Georgy.

"Not know who he was!" said Oswald, in astonishment. Why I thought every one knew Walter Scott's lines about his death :—

"I climb'd the dark brow of the mighty Helvellyn."

"Yes, even I, who am no lover of poetry, know those lines."

"Was the poor young man who was killed in crossing the Helvellyn named Charles Gough? And was he buried here?"

"Yes, I will show you his grave now."

In a short time they stood beside it, and the two girls remained sad and silent, while their companion gave them an account of the dreadful fate of him who was buried there. He had heard it often from persons who knew Mr. Gough, and from some of the men who brought back the dead body. Some of my readers may not know the story.

This gentleman set off one morning, in the spring of 1805, from Patterdale, to cross Helvellyn. There is nothing dangerous in such an expedition in the summer time; but Mr. Gough trusted to his knowledge of the path, and went when a fall of snow had concealed it. For about three months nothing was seen or heard of him. His friends searched everywhere in vain. At last the body was found at the foot of a precipice, called Striding Edge, on the ascent of Helvellyn. Whether he died from hunger, being unable to get out of the precipitous hollow into which he had fallen, or whether he was killed by the fall, is not clear. The two girls could not help shedding tears when Oswald told them of Mr. Charles Gough's favourite dog, who was with him on that unfortunate expedition, and who was found half starved, but still alive, watching the

dead body of his master. Oswald repeated some lines of Wordsworth, in which he mentions this touching instance of brute attachment :—

“ This dog had been through three months’ space
A dweller in that savage place ;
Yes—proof was plain, that since the day
On which the traveller thus had died,
The dog had watched about the spot,
Or by his master’s side.
How nourished there through such long time
He knows, who gave that love sublime,
And gave that strength of feeling great
Above all human estimate.”

Arbell’s blue eyes were still dim with tears, as they turned away from the grave to look at the wonderful yew tree of Patterdale Churchyard. Oswald assured them that it is ten feet in diameter at its base, and seven about the middle. They were speculating as to its probable antiquity, when the rest of the party joined them.

“ What do you say to mounting Helvellyn, girls ? ” asked Mr. Casterton, putting a hand on a shoulder of each of his nieces, and looking down smilingly in their faces. To his surprise, they uttered no exclamation of delight, but looked at each other, and then towards the grave of Charles Gough.

“ Oh ! I see ; you have been hearing the sad story of poor Charles Gough ! but that need not prevent us from going up. It is perfectly safe, my dears : Mr. St. John, and I, and the boys know the path very well. The day is all before us, and there is very little probability of clouds settling upon the face of the mountain. We can ride up very nearly to the top, and when you are there, I

fancy *you*, at least, Arbell, will not be in a hurry to come down. Everything is arranged, the ponies are ready, and we have ordered dinner at the inn here, at five o'clock. It is not ten yet; therefore, we shall have ample time for the expedition."

"Oh, Uncle! I wish I had not heard that story about Mr. Gough! But we *shall* like to go, of course," said Georgy, recovering her spirits a little. "Come, Arbell."

Arbell followed with Oswald, to whom she whispered, "Shall we go near the place where that sad accident happened?"

"Yes," he replied, "I will show it to you."

Here was another instance of the truth of what Arbell said to Georgy the day before:—"When any pleasure that we have very much desired comes to us, there is generally something connected with it which makes it very different from what we expected it to be." She had looked forward to climbing Helvellyn as one of the pleasantest and most *enjoyable* of all her mountain treats; and now she could not divest her mind of the thought of Charles Gough—lost,—killed,—on the very expedition they were about to make.

Oswald was a very kind and good-natured lad; and as soon as they were out of the churchyard he did his best to chase these gloomy thoughts from her mind: and he succeeded when they were all mounted once more.

Georgy was soon engaged in some funny talk with Cuthbert and Julia about Laurence and his laziness; and, at last, Laurence called Oswald to witness that, in spite of his customary laziness, he was the best climber of them all, when the ground was really difficult. Cuthbert demurred; and

Georgy offered to be umpire when they came to the difficulties. These three kept mostly together.

Mr. and Mrs. St. John followed with Mr. Casterton, and Oswald, Julia and Arbell brought up the rear. Thus they set off on the ascent of Helvellyn. They went by the easiest road, through Glenridding. While they had the lake in sight, Arbell could scarcely look at anything else; but when they turned their backs to it, and began to ascend that beautiful glen, her attention was excited by the wildness of all around; especially of the stream which forces its way through Glenridding after its escape from the Red Tarn, near the summit of the mountain. By keeping the stream close at hand they found the easiest way up to the famous Red Tarn, which is, I believe, the highest tarn among the Westmoreland mountains. It is two thousand feet above the level of the sea, and covers twenty acres, and, as Cuthbert informed the two girls, when they were all looking down from the summit, and thinking of anything but the creature comforts,—“There’s prime trout in that tarn. I wish I had the means of catching some for our dinner.” But I must inform you that before they reached the top they had the *difficulties* of Helvellyn to encounter. These were trifling on a fine, clear day; but when Oswald explained the nature of the sudden atmospheric changes, at that elevation, Arbell saw that the climbing of Catchedecam, and the crossing of Swirrel Edge, a ridge of rocks enclosing the Red Tarn on one side, was, indeed, dangerous. It is necessary to cross Swirrel Edge, or Striding Edge (another ledge of rocks on the other side the Red Tarn), in order to climb up the last portion of the mountain, to Helvellyn Man, as

they call the heap of stones on the highest point. Now, Swirrel Edge looks rather frightful to cross ; but there is, in reality, no danger there; but Striding Edge is really dangerous, even on a fine clear day, and to strong-headed, sure-footed people ; for at one part the ledge of rocks you have to cross is barely two yards wide, and there is a tremendous precipice on both sides. The wind blows with great violence round the upper portion of the mountains ; and that, with the sight of the precipices beneath, and the sense of having no support on either hand if a false step be made, generally renders the head a little dizzy and the feet unsteady. Still, people sometimes ascend to the summit by Striding Edge.

Arbell, who had now recovered all her usual spirit and boldness, made her way remarkably well as a climber. I ought to have mentioned that they left the horses below Catchedecam, in the care of a man who came with them for that purpose. Oswald undertook to help Arbell, and Georgy was attended by Cuthbert and Laurence, while Julia, who was not so brave as our two friends, kept close to her father.

If any of my readers have climbed a mountain, they will understand a little of the exhilaration and active boldness which possessed the delicate little Arbell. When they were past Swirrel Edge, Oswald pointed out the part of Striding Edge from which poor Charles Gough is supposed to have fallen, having mistaken the path in the snow.

"Can we not go nearer to it?" asked Arbell.

"If you are not afraid, we can go quite safely to the very place, and I can show you where the body was found, with the faithful dog beside it."

"I should not be at all afraid. I have a steady

head, and do not mind looking down these precipices. I should like to see that spot. Can we go now?"

"Yes. Wait till the others have gone on a little way, and then we will go back quickly."

They did so; and Arbell almost reached the narrowest part of Striding Edge, when her foot slipped; and, if it had not been for Oswald, she believed she would have rolled over the precipice. For the first time she felt frightened at the thought of going on, but she strove to conceal her fear, and stood still while Oswald pointed out the spot among the rocks below where the corpse was found. She sickened at the sight, and turned away, for, in imagination, she saw the dead man and his faithful dog still there.

"Oh, let us come away, or I shall not have strength to get back," she said. "I feel quite ill."

Oswald took her hand kindly, and led her back to the broad and safe ground again. Here they waited a few minutes, and then crossed Swirrel Edge once more, and were not long in reaching the top. Before they arrived there, however, they heard cries of "Here they are! Here they are!" and soon Mr. Casterton and Georgy ran down to meet them, with pale, alarmed faces.

"Where have you been? Why did you stay behind?" they asked.

The others soon joined them, and when they were informed what the two had been doing, every one was indignant.

"Thoughtless," "imprudent," "wrong," sounded on all sides of them—"We were quite alarmed; could not think what had become of you."

"Oswald, I am quite surprised that you could do such a thing as to leave the rest of the party, without telling us, and to go to such a place with a young lady!" said Mr. St. John, angrily.

"Arbell, I cannot trust you out of sight in any perilous situation!" said Mr. Casterton, gravely. "I must beg you will not leave my side till we are safe in Patterdale again."

And thus Arbell's delight in gazing at the prospect from Helvellyn Man was damped by the consciousness that every one was displeased with her, and justly: for she felt that they had done wrong to go thus thoughtlessly into a point of known danger. It was not till several days after that she told her uncle that she had actually fallen down on Striding Edge. He shuddered when he heard it; and it was a long time before he took Oswald into his favour again.

Poor Oswald! he was the worst off. Mr. Casterton, Mr. and Mrs. St. John, Julia and Cuthbert, all blamed him severely for his carelessness. Only Arbell and Laurence thought that he was unjustly blamed.

"I asked him to go," said Arbell.

"There is no real danger at Striding Edge," said Laurence, contemptuously. "Surely Miss Dudley can stand on two yards of rock; I think nothing of that!"

Oswald was a sensible lad; and being at once aware, when he came to think of it, that he ought not to have taken Arbell away without permission, he made a manly apology, and said he was sorry that he had led Miss Dudley into such an act of imprudence. Mr. St. John was satisfied; but Mr. Casterton said,—

"I am glad you see your error, my boy; but I cannot trust this giddy Arbell with you alone any more; you are both too heedless, and full of romance; you forget realities, and may break your necks. But let us say no more about this now. There is all the Lake country at our feet. Here is Blencathara close at hand, and there Skiddaw. That twisted lake beneath us is Ullswater, Arbell. Does it not look bright as silver at this moment?" And the kind old man, anxious to make her forget his displeasure, pointed out all the chief points in that extensive range.

They remained about half an hour on the summit. The descent was achieved without any accident; and Oswald rode beside Arbell and her uncle through Glenridding. As they approached the inn, Mr. Casterton rode on to arrange with a boatman to take them down the lake after dinner.

"What are you thinking of?" asked Oswald of Arbell.

"Our scrape," she replied, with a smile. "It was very thoughtless in us not to remember that they would miss us, and be frightened; but I am really glad we saw the place."

"Then I don't mind having done wrong for once," said Oswald, laughing. "For depend upon it, if we had asked permission to go to that particular point they would not have allowed it. There's a superstition against it."

"I shall never forget it!" said Arbell. "I am glad I fell, too, now it is over. It helps me to understand what *he* must have felt," and she murmured some of Scott's verses to herself:—

"Dark green was the spot mid the brown mountain heather
Where the pilgrim of nature lay stretched in decay—

Like the corpse of an outcast abandoned to weather
 Till the mountain-winds wasted the tenantless clay.
 Nor yet quite deserted, though lonely extended,
 For faithful in death his mute favourite attended,
 The much loved remains of his master defended,
 And chased the hill fox and the raven away.

* * * * *

How long didst thou think that his silence was slumber?
 When the wind waved his garments how oft didst thou
 start?

How many long days and long nights didst thou number,
 Ere he faded before thee, the friend of thine heart?"

"Arbell, as usual, muttering poetic charms!"
 exclaimed Georgy, as they alighted at the inn.
 "What ill are you charming away?"

"If it is hunger," Miss Arbell, said Cuthbert,
 "just glance through that window and it will be
 cured. Oh! what a blessing is a good dinner,
 when you have been climbing a mountain all
 day!"

In about a quarter of an hour every one was
 ready to sit down to an excellent dinner. Arbell
 had never been so hungry in her life. During the
 first ten minutes there was little conversation, for
 every one was busily engaged in eating; after that
 there was no lack of talk about the adventures of
 the morning.

At about half-past seven o'clock the boatman
 came to say that there were two boats ready to
 take the party to Pooly Bridge.

If any of my readers have been from one end of
 Ullswater to the other in a boat, they will not need
 any reminder of the beauties and pleasures of that
 transit: those among them who have not, would
 gain very little idea of them from any description
 I could give. It was a delicious evening; and,

as they reclined comfortably in the boats, our party recovered from their fatigue better than they could have done in any parlour of that delightful inn at Patterdale. When they arrived at Pooley Bridge, they were within a minute's walk of the inn there, at which beds for their whole party had been taken. Arbell, whose mind was quite saturated with the beauty of the lake, retired immediately; and Georgy, who was quite tired out, did the same.

The next morning the whole party met at breakfast in high spirits. During that meal Mr. Casterton explained the plan which had been formed for that day. Carriages were to be in readiness to take them to the famous Valley of St. John, directly after breakfast; thence they were to drive to Gowbarrow Park, on the west bank of Ullswater, where they were to dismiss the carriages, ramble about the park, see Lyulph's Tower and Airey Force; and then walk by the road skirting the lake, by Glencoin and Stybarrow Crag, to the inn, at Patterdale, where they were to dine, and rest themselves, and then ride home in the cool of the evening, on the horses and ponies which they had left there.

The boys were delighted with this plan; and they and Julia began, as soon as they started, to tell the visitors all that they could think of that was interesting connected with their road. Georgy knew the singular history of Lord Clifford—"the Shepherd Lord"—and was glad she should see the ruins of Threlkeld Hall, and the mountains about it where the young lord kept sheep, safe in that disguise from his enemies.

Arbell cared more for the Valley of St. John. Miss Travers had directed her attention to this

beautiful Vale, and had read to her those parts of “The Bridal of Triermain” which describe its peculiarities. She remembered, especially, the rock which looks like an extensive fortress, and which King Arthur, in the “Bridal of Triermain,” mistakes for one.

Oswald here came to her assistance, and repeated some of the passages which she wished to recal :—

“With toil the king his way pursued
By lovely Threlkeld’s waste and wood,
Till on his course obliquely shone
The narrow Valley of St. John,
Down sloping to the western sky,
Where lingering sunbeams love to lie.

* * * *

Paled in by many a lofty hill,
The narrow dale lay smooth and still ;
And down its verdant bosom led,
A winding brooklet found its bed.’

“This ‘winding brooklet’ is a branch of our Cumberland Greta, and is called St. John’s Beck, let me tell you, en passant,” said Oswald, and then went on—

“But midmost of the vale a mound
Arose, with airy turrets crowned,—
Buttress and rampire’s circling bound,
And mighty keep and tower ;—
Seemed some primeval giant’s hand,
The castle’s massive walls had planned
A ponderous bulwark to withstand
Ambitious Nimrod’s power.
Above the moated entrance slung,
The balanced drawbridge trembling hung,
As jealous of a foe.
Wicket of oak—as iron hard—
With iron studded, clenched, and barrred,
And prong’d portcullis joined to guard
The gloomy pass below.

But the grey walls no banners crowned :
 Upon the watch-tower's airy round
 No warder stood, his horn to sound—
 No guard beside the bridge was found ;
 And where the Gothic gateway frowned,
 Glanced neither bill nor bow.' "

" I say, that's a fine description ! " said Cuthbert.
 " Scott was the fellow for writing poetry ! "

" Yes, *I* like that," said Georgy. " *I* like the
tune of it."

" Here we are, at the entrance of the Vale of
 St. John ! " said Julia. " Now, Arbell, prepare to
 be enchanted."

I shall not dwell on all the beauties of that
 lovely valley, but will leave it with its graceful
 superstition, so well kept up by the strange forms
 of cloud and mist ; for to the present day it often
 happens that

" When a pilgrim strays,
 In morning mist or evening maze,
 Along the mountains lone ;
 That fairy fortress often mocks
 His gaze upon the castled rocks
 Of the Valley of St. John."

Gowbarrow Park and the view of Ullswater from
 Lyulph's Tower pleased the two girls equally.
 Lyulph's Tower is a hunting-box, built by one of
 the Dukes of Norfolk, to whose family this fine
 park belongs. Airey Force is the finest waterfall
 in the Lake country. It is formed, as all these
 forces or waterfalls are, by a mountain stream
 forcing its way headlong over a ledge of rocks.
 But the glen of the fall is peculiarly wild and
 romantic, the rocks are large and of striking shapes,
 and variously tinted. Trees and underwood over-
 arch a great portion of the fall, throwing a deep

shadow across it and the neighbouring rocks, making here and there, with the reflection of the white foam—

“A little glooming light much like a shade.”

Airey Force made a powerful impression upon Arbell’s mind, and for several nights after she saw its wild waters and heard its roar in her dreams. The appearance of the groups of mountains at the Patterdale end of Ullswater struck her again as they returned to the inn. She caused a laugh at her expense by making a mistake that showed she was quite inattentive to the conversation of the party.

“What is the name of the King of Patterdale?” asked Georgy.

Arbell happened to hear the question, and then said—

“Oh, that is difficult to tell. Who can say which is king, Place Fell, or Catchedecam, or Helvellyn?”

“Lost among the mountains, I see!” said Mr. Casterton. “Don’t you want your dinner, Arbell?”

“No!—Yes!” now I think of it, I am hungry.”

It was much the same when they reached Black-tarn that evening.

“Now, Miss Arbell, my dear,” said Hannah, “I am sure you must be as tired as a dog. Don’t you want to go to bed?”

“Go to bed!” exclaimed Arbell, as if astonished to hear of the existence of such a thing as bed; and then she added, as she sat down in her bedroom, “I believe you are right, Hannah; I am tired and had better go to bed, that I may have the luxury of lying awake ever so long, and think-

ing over these two delightful days, the happiest I ever spent. Oh! what a beautiful world we live in!"

I cannot give an account of the many pleasant excursions which the girls enjoyed afterwards with Mr. Casterton. They spent a week in the neighbourhood of Windermere. They were taken by him to see the poet Wordsworth, at his house, called Rydal Mount. They spent another week in a journey along the sea coast, from the famous Furness Abbey to Maryport, and another week in going over the country, between Maryport and Penrith, and Penrith and Keswick; whence, after an absence of three weeks, they returned to Blacktarn, quite versed in the geography and history of one small portion of our beautiful island. And now the girls began to reckon the few, too few days, which remained before the end of their holidays.

CHAPTER IX.

GLENARA CASTLE.

“Present yourself
That which you are—mistress
O’ the feast.”

WINTER’S TALE.

THE Sunday after their return from this delightful tour, the girls went again to Blacktarn Church with their Uncle. This was only the second time that they had been to the service there—they had been away three Sundays. They reached the Church some time before the service began; and Mr. Casterton, having to visit a sick man in the village, left them to examine the monuments and inscriptions in the building. Again Arbell read over attentively all the English inscriptions in memory of the Dudleys; and, at Georgy’s instigation, went into the *castle pew*, as it was called. This was a great pew in the chancel, as big as a small room. It was higher than any other. Those who sat in it were screened, by a finely carved oak partition, from the eyes of the congregation. It was lined with crimson cloth, which was faded and dirty. There was a small stove in this pew, which looked as if it had not had a fire in it for many a long year. This was, in truth, the case; for in the winter time, General Dudley was generally too rheumatic to venture on a ride or drive of four

miles, to a cold church, and he had the service read at home.

While they were looking into this pew, a woman came to dust the cushions and books, and set the hassocks in order.

"The General is coming to church this morning, and we must brush things up a little," she said, as a sort of apology for turning them out.

They then took their seats in Mr. Casterton's pew, which was immediately below the one just described. I fear Arbell was not able to collect her thoughts so well as usual that morning; they were wandering about among the departed Dudleys, whose names and deeds she had been reading; and dwelt frequently on the grandfather, who would so soon be standing near, separated from her only by a thin partition.

The congregation began to assemble. She saw the vicarage party enter the church, and Mr. St. John go into the vestry. Presently there was the sound of a carriage stopping at the gate; and very soon she saw her uncle come in, with a taller and more majestic looking old man beside him. She recognised the bright blue eyes and long grey hair of General Dudley at the first glance; and then she looked away, and opened her prayer-book, that she might not see him any more. She tried very hard to keep her attention fixed on the service, and succeeded so well as to have forgotten the castle pew and its inmate, until the first hymn was sung; then, as she was singing, she chanced to look up, and caught a glimpse of her grandfather looking between the half-closed curtains of his pew straight down at her face. Their eyes met for a moment, and then she looked down again at her book; but

rom that time she ceased to attend properly to the service. She tried hard to forget, but she could not help remembering, that one look of her grandfather. It certainly was not stern, or angry. She thought it was a kind look. She felt very uncomfortable that day about the wandering of her thoughts in church. She told Georgy, in confidence, about her grandfather's look, and how it had driven all other thoughts from her mind. Georgy consoled her by saying—

"That though she ought to be sorry for being inattentive to the service, yet it could not be true that she was really *wicked*, because she did it very unwillingly." Georgy said, "That those people only were wicked who did wrong *willingly*. Now, you did try very hard, you say, dear Arbell, not to think about other things. It was a pity that we went to look about the church first. If it had not been for that, you would not have had all those things to think about. This reminds me of Mr. St. John's text, which you did not hear, perhaps, or it would have explained how it is that, sometimes, when we want very much to do what is right, we find ourselves doing what is wrong. '*The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak.*' The older I grow, the harder I find it to do what I know very well it is best to do."

"If you feel so too, Georgy—if you think *you* would have been as inattentive in church to-day as I was, if you had been Arbell Dudley—I shall not feel quite so uncomfortable. I shall get courage to do better next time the temptation comes."

"The same temptation wont come again, you know, dear," said Georgy. "This day week we shall be back at Eastgate House. That's what I

thought of once or twice in church. Oh, how I shall hate to go back! My only comfort is that Julia St. John is trying hard to persuade her mamma and papa to send her to Miss Travers' with us, and I hope she will succeed."

Arbell expressed much pleasure at this news; and the two girls wandered about by the side of the tarn that afternoon, talking over all the past month, and anticipating the great delight it would be to think and talk of it all in the play-hours at school during the coming half-year.

"And now, Arbell," said Georgy, "I feel tolerably safe about your grandpapa. As he has not sent to carry you off to his castle nor been here to see you, I don't think he means to take any notice of you at all. We shall have you back at Eastgate House, and Miss Travers and Mrs. Vernon will not lose their favourite."

Arbell said nothing in reply to that; but she was not silent from want of thought.

The very next day, however, Georgy's opinion on this subject began to waver. As they were sitting not far from the waterfall with some needle-work, which they were preparing for the school children in the village, Mr. Casterton came and sat down on the bank beside them.

"I have just received an invitation for you both to join a juvenile party at Glenara Castle. Will you like to go?" And his eyes rested on Arbell.

"Oh! yes, Uncle," said Georgy. "We should both like to go into Glenara Castle again. Would you not, Arbell? If you are not—" and she stopped short in her sentence.

"Yes," said Arbell, suddenly raising her head,

with decision, "I think I should like to go there, if you wish it, Uncle."

"I do wish it, my dear," he said, gravely.

"What did my grandpapa call *me* when he invited us?—did he write a note?"

"No. I met him at the vicarage, where he was making a call for the purpose of asking your young friends there, and he then invited my '*two nieces*.'"

"He did not say '*my grand-daughter*,' or '*Arabella Dudley*,' then?" said Arbell, as if she were a little disappointed.

"No, my dear, he did not. But he said, 'That he wished to give his usual summer party to the young people in the neighbourhood before my visitors left Blacktarn.' He had heard, it seems, that you are going on Saturday."

"How very odd for such a gentleman as General Dudley to give a juvenile party!" exclaimed Georgy. "He is the last person I should have thought of as likely to do such a thing."

"I am not surprised to hear you say that, because you are not a native of this district; otherwise, you would know that General Dudley is very fond of young people when he is well; and that it is his custom to give a party in the summer and a grand ball in the winter to all the young folks for ten miles round. Cuthbert and Julia will tell you that these parties are always very agreeable."

"On what day is this party? What sort of a party is it? I mean, are we to go late, and is everybody to be full dressed?"

"Wednesday is the day—five o'clock is the hour—and you may go dressed just as you please, I should imagine."

"My dear Uncle, that is because you go just as you please, always. Dress is a matter of very much importance to young ladies, let me tell you," said Georgy.

"I am aware of that. It is often a matter of too much importance. I hope you do not mean to grow into a young woman whose time and thoughts are given up to dress and vanity."

"No, indeed, Uncle," said Arbell, who was seriously afraid that Mr. Casterton would think that Georgy really did give much attention to dress, "she is not likely to grow up into such a woman—that is, if the girl is mother to the woman, as they say 'the boy is father to the man.' The girl here, called Georgy, is very indifferent to dress. Hannah says she thinks she 'never will take proper pride in herself.' Hannah gets quite angry with her sometimes, because she will not take notice of her dress, and is, sometimes, even untidy."

"Untidy! There, Uncle! That is friendly, is it not?" asked Georgy, laughing. But, seriously, Arbell, Hannah will be right-down cross if we do not tell her we are going out on Wednesday evening. She will find a host of things to do for our dresses, I am sure; and as, when we are both concerned in the same error, she always scolds *me*, and never says a word to you (because I'm the *biggest*, I suppose), I shall just run and tell her now;" and away ran Georgy towards the house.

"Georgy is a very active, good-natured girl," observed her Uncle, looking after her. "You will be sorry to part from her."

"But we are not going to part, I hope," said Arbell. "She means to stay at school as long as

ever she can, on purpose that we may be together. It will be a sad day for me when Georgy leaves school ; but, I suppose, by that time, I shall be beginning to teach, and help Miss Travers in the house, so that I shall not have much time to brood over her loss. Besides, Richmond is not far from Kensington. How strange it seems to talk of those places here ! They seem as if they were in another world. Mrs. Braithwaite makes me laugh sometimes, with her queer notions about London and Londoners. One would think that London was one of the Sandwich Islands!"

Her Uncle laughed, and said, "that Kendal was the centre of civilization to Mrs. Braithwaite. She had never seen a larger town." He then related some droll stories about the people of a small, remote village among the fells in Yorkshire, called Dent. Dent is entirely shut out from the rest of the world, and the inhabitants seem to have no desire to know anything beyond their own neighbourhood. It is said that two persons once left this village, and travelled as far south as Manchester. When the moon rose on the night after their arrival, they were overcome with surprise, and one exclaimed to the other, "Why, yon's the *Dent Moon* ! How comes that about ?" It is also related, that about seventy years ago, a carriage—a yellow chariot—by some strange chance drove through Dent, and the people ran out of their houses to look at it, calling out, "See ! A ship ! a ship !" From this it was clear that they had never seen either the sea or a carriage. Many similar stories about this village, Mr. Casterton told ; and as they returned home he promised to find out a very amusing chapter in Dr. Southey's "*Doctor*," called the

“Terrible Knitters o’ Dent,” and read it to them that evening. He said he feared even Arbell would not be able to read it herself, quick as she was in understanding the Westmoreland dialect. It had been taken down from the lips of an old woman at Ambleside, by some ladies of Mr. Wordsworth’s family. This old woman was one of the children who figure in the story.

They were very much amused by it; and I would advise any of my young readers who think they can make out the language of the peasantry of the West Riding of Yorkshire, as it was a hundred years ago and is still, to read this simple, humorous, and touching story of the two children who ran away from Dent to escape from the incessant knitting that went on there.

A few minutes before five o’clock on Wednesday evening, Mr. Casterton’s carriage, containing himself and the two girls, entered the gate of the Glenara grounds. Every one had been silent during the latter part of the drive, and every one was thinking of the same thing, viz., *how* General Dudley would behave to his grand-daughter. Georgy fancied that the sternest and most obstinate man must be softened at the sight of Arbell’s sweet face; that any one, however proud and grand, would be glad to acknowledge her as his relation; and then came her fears that Arbell would indeed be made the Lady of the Castle, and she should have to go back to London without her. Arbell’s mind had been in a sad turmoil all the morning; but she became calmer and her courage rose as the time drew nearer. Now, while they were driving from the porter’s lodge up to the great door of the castle, she became pale, but felt as if she could look her

grandpapa in the face without shrinking from his piercing glance. She was the first to speak.

"How different this place looks now! I have always thought of it as we saw it that night by moonlight. I like this avenue being kept so wild, and all this moorland coming close up to the door. Is it done on purpose?"

"Yes, my dear. Your grandfather and your father both thought it was in better taste to keep Glenara strictly *a castle on the moor*. A portion of the moor is *enclosed*; but it has never been dressed up or cultivated, unless you may call those plantations of firs and pines—made by your father—*cultivation*. They are in character with the scenery, and soften the general bareness."

At this moment the carriage stopped, and Arbell's attention was called away from inanimate nature. There, on the steps of the hall-door, stood her grandfather waiting to receive his guests. A group of girls and boys stood behind him, in the wide door-way of the hall, anxious to see the new comers. Georgy recognised some familiar faces among them, and heard the words—"Mr. Casterton and his nieces!" pass from mouth to mouth. Arbell heard and saw nothing but her grandfather. She tried hard not to tremble, as he helped her from the carriage; and when he said, "How do you do, my dear?" she tried to look into his face, and say, "Very well, I thank you;" but all the courage which she possessed on the road now seemed to melt away: she could not look him in the face; and instead of answering his inquiry, she became paler than before, and felt a choking sensation in the throat, which prevented her from speaking.

Her grandfather held her hand, and bending kindly over her, said—

“Are you ill, my dear?”

She looked up at him with the tears in her eyes, and said—

“No, Sir.”

“That is well,” he said, still holding her hand; and then turning towards the group who blocked up the entrance,—“Make way there, boys and girls! Room for two young ladies! Where are you, Miss Casterton? There, now I have you both!” he said, leading them into the hall.

A servant took their hats and shawls, and in another moment they were shaking hands with their acquaintances. The St. Johns and the Bartons were the chief of these. Oswald remained beside Arbell, and she felt as if he were a sort of protection in the midst of her fears. Her grandfather still held her hand while he talked to her uncle. Oswald directed her attention to the stained-glass window, which shed its beautiful hues over them as they stood. He assured her that it made her fair curls look as if she had all sorts of precious stones among them. Very pretty he thought she looked, though she wore a gloomy black dress, and Julia and all the other girls wore pretty coloured or white muslin frocks. Oswald thought that Arbell looked prettier and sweeter than all the rest. She was pale and uncomfortable; and he guessed that her grandfather had something to do with it.

“Can’t you slip your hand away? General Dudley is not attending to you. There are some beautiful things here that I want to show you,” he whispered, pointing to a cabinet which stood on one side of the hall.

She tried to slip her hand away—very gently. General Dudley felt the movement, and turned hastily—

“Do you want to go from me?”

“No, Sir, not if you would rather have me stay.”

“I would rather keep you near me for a few moments. Now, girls and boys, our whole party is assembled. Before we begin our amusements, I must introduce you to my grand-daughter, Miss Dudley. Some of you know her better than I do. I hear she is a good girl, and she looks as if she were. Circumstances have kept her long away from me; but from this day forward we shall know each other better.

“Now, my dear,” he said, turning to Arbell, “you must act as mistress of the house this evening: we elder folks shall leave you all to amuse yourselves for an hour, after which tea and coffee will be served in the old banqueting-room. Julia St. John, here, knows her way about the house. You can all go where you like—anywhere and everywhere, except into my study. I hope you will all attend to the wishes of your hostess.” Then stooping his proud head, he kissed Arbell’s forehead, and said in a low tone, that no one heard but Georgy and Oswald,—“God bless you!”

In another moment, he and “the elders,” as Cuthbert called them, had disappeared; and Arbell stood, with a flushed cheek and a tearful eye, just where he had left her. Georgy drew her arm within her own, and Oswald stood on the other side.

Every one looked at Arbell in silence, for a minute, when Oswald exclaimed—

“There is another carriage! Hark!”

They all ran out to the steps to see who was coming.

"Now, Georgy—quick! quick!" said Oswald. "Take her away through that door," pointing to the far end of the hall. "You'll find a quiet little room. I'll amuse them all till you come back."

Arbell thought of that little trick of Oswald long afterwards. He had read her wish exactly. "What would I give to get away from them all for five minutes!"

She managed to get quickly out of the hall with Georgy, and arrived, breathless, in the little room he had indicated. It was the very one in which they had both fallen asleep on that memorable night. Arbell threw herself on the same sofa, and holding out her arms to Georgy, embraced her.

"Oh! I am so happy! He does not hate me! He loves me a little! He has acknowledged me as his grand-daughter. Oh! Georgy, Georgy, we have been unjust to him. He is not stern and cross! He is not a bit like what he was that night."

"Not a bit!" said Georgy. "I should not have known him. I think he is almost as nice as Uncle Stuart. I wish you joy of your new relation, my dear, dear Arbell. So now you are the Lady of the Castle, after all! Well! I am very selfish, for I cannot help, in the midst of these fine events, thinking that on Saturday I and Hannah shall have to go home without you."

Arbell started up. "No! I must go home, too."

"This is your home, Arbell! Your grandfather intends you to come and live here. Happy *you*, to live in a castle, in the beautiful North, near Uncle Stuart and the St. Johns! I dare say your grand-

papa will do everything you like—take you to see the lakes again, and the lovely stalactite caverns which I have not seen. Oh! you will be as happy as the day is long, instead of being shut up in that dull school-room at Eastgate House! Don't look so puzzled, Arbell! I wont think of school now, or anything but your new honours. Come! compose yourself, and be dignified. You must go back and behave like a hostess to your guests. They *are* your guests, you know—your grandpapa said so. Let me put your curls right. You don't look very romantic, with your hair sticking about like *that*. It is not becoming in a young lady who has just been acknowledged by her grandfather, and requested to act the hostess to a party of twenty visitors, to walk along with her frock all open behind! That comes of flinging yourself on the sofa with such violence. The Lady of the Castle should sink down with graceful languor—in *this style*,” said Georgy, sitting down in an absurdly affected manner. Arbell could not help laughing, and that was just what Georgy wanted.

“Indeed, I did not burst my frock open from flinging myself down violently, but from having grown fat. It's too small for me.”

“Shocking!” said Georgy. “How coarse you are, Miss Dudley! I am quite ashamed of you. Ladies of Castles never grow fat. It's vulgar. Let me see if I can set matters right, with a pin. There, that will do for the present. But take care you do not turn your back upon Mrs. St. John. Her eyes are very sharp; she will see that great white pin, directly. This is a poor beginning for you in the character of a person of consequence!”

“I am quite able to go back now, Georgy, dear;

but you'll find yourself mistaken about the Lady of the Castle. Wait a little longer before you make quite sure of not having me back with you.—Come, let us go to the hall. Was it not kind of Oswald to get us away? But he played them a trick, I am sure."

"Of course he did. I did not think he was so clever."

When they returned to the hall, they found that Oswald had fulfilled his promise, and was "amusing them all." The whole party was grouped around him as he sat on the corner of a large table, speaking very seriously, but not loud enough for the two girls to hear what he said, as they came into the hall. He had been satisfying the curiosity of some of the party by explaining to them *how* it was that Arbell was the General's grand-daughter and Mr. Casterton's niece, and yet that they had none of them heard of or seen her before. When he said that she was born in India, and had been at school near London, they seemed to think her absence from Glenara and Blacktarn sufficiently accounted for. They pitied her for being an orphan; and they thought it a fine thing to come and live at Glenara, with the General, as they supposed she would do now.

Oswald said, "He was doubtful about that. Miss Dudley was only fourteen years of age, and her friends might think proper to keep her at school some time longer. But, if we wait patiently, we shall all know, in time, what her friends decide on that point. She is the General's heiress, and there never was a prettier little Lady of a Castle. Let us do all we can to make this day pass pleasantly to her—this first day of visiting her grandfather."

"What a sweet face she has!" said one.

"Such pretty hair!" said another.

"Her eyes are just like her grandpapa's."

"Who is she in mourning for?"

"For her father," said Julia.

"Captain Dudley died more than two years ago," said some one.

"My father says the General has never been the same since his son's death."

"Perhaps he may be happier again, now that he has such a sweet girl for his grand-daughter."

"It's a fine thing to be Miss Dudley, of Glenara Castle," said one lively girl; "I wish I had such a piece of good fortune!"

"What! would you like to give up your old home, and your own family?" asked her sister.

"No, not exactly. See! here they come. What a pretty girl Miss Casterton is! and so clever, too! Have you heard them sing together? They have such sweet voices. We will ask them, presently."

Georgy, as usual, saved Arbell the trouble of speaking. As soon as they reached the group, she said,—

"What are we going to do? How shall we amuse ourselves? Julia, General Dudley said you know your way over the castle. Neither Arbell nor I know anything about it. We have never been here but once before, and that was for a very short time, and at night."

"It is fit that the new Lady of Glenara should examine her castle," said Cuthbert, smiling kindly at Arbell. "There are several others here who have never been inside it before. Suppose we devote the hour before tea to looking at every room in the castle."

"A very good idea," said Julia.

As every one seemed to think so too, Arbell was glad. Her face became bright, and her curiosity seemed to be aroused all at once. While she was doubtful about her grandfather's feeling towards her, she had thought very little of what there was to interest her in the castle where he lived. When she thought of or saw Glenara at a distance, she only called to mind the angry, proud old gentleman whom she had seen that night. She was so much occupied with thinking about him, and speculating upon what he thought of her, that the castle itself, and all else it contained, were to her matters of indifference.

Now, however, when she was satisfied that he had not forgotten that she was his grandchild, and that he felt some affection for her (she was sure he *did*, both from the look she had caught on Sunday, and from his behaviour just now), she felt a strong, and very natural, desire to examine the home of her ancestors.

"Ancestors!" she repeated to herself. "Yes, I have ancestors! I hope there are pictures of them, that I may see what they were like."

As they all went up the great staircase, she asked Julia "if there was a picture gallery?"

"Yes," said Julia; "but there are no *good* pictures there, nothing of any value, papa says; only old family portraits."

"What a goose you are, Julia," said Cuthbert. "The old family portraits are just the very things that Arbell will most value. She will care more for the full-length portrait of Sir James Dudley, badly painted as it is, than she did for all the fine old masters at Lowther Castle."

"And so would you, and so would we all, if Sir

James Dudley, who was killed at Marston Moor, were *our* ancestor," said Oswald. "That makes all the difference."

"To be sure it does," said Laurence. It's being interested in the person that makes a portrait valuable. Show *me* a portrait of James Watt, and I should care more for it than for the fine old masters, as you call them."

Arbell said nothing ; she was too busily engaged with her eyes. Everything almost that she saw looked old and massy ; the furniture in most of the rooms was shabby, and very few things were beautiful. The rooms themselves looked gloomy and uninhabited. The shutters were closed in many of them, and ivy had grown across the windows.

"If I were the Lady of Glenara," said Cuthbert, "I should have these rooms made a great deal smarter. I would have the windows cleaned, and the ivy cut away."

"See, here is a curious old chair!"

"What a huge fire-place!"

"Oh, here is a beautiful cabinet, all covered with dust and dirt!"

"Look, Arbell, look!" said Georgy, "what a sweet little dressing-room ! This will do for your *sanctum*. See ! the window looks towards Black-tarn. I can see a bit of the waterfall ; and there is the top of the tallest chimney just peeping above the side of the Fell."

"Miss Dudley, Miss Dudley, here's an old cabinet full of miniatures ! See, what curious old things!"

"Oh ! come and look at the state bed-room, Miss Dudley!"

"But wont you look at the Chinese-room first?"

And the eager young crowd swarmed about the old rooms and galleries, and made more noise than had been made within them for many a long day. Every one was eager to show Arbell what he or she had discovered that was rare, or wonderful, or beautiful. She was distracted by a dozen eager entreaties at once, to look at this, or come and see that. She was quite overcome with pleasure at the kind attentions of her companions.

"Are you happy now?" asked Oswald.

"Yes, very happy!" said Arbell.

"You find it pleasant to be high-born?" he asked, looking curiously into her face.

"Yes," she replied. "Do not you? Oh! I forgot! *Your* father is a manufacturer. But would not you rather be the son of a good family?"

Oswald coloured slightly. "No, I would not be the son of any one but of my own dear father. It is all very well for *girls* to be of good or noble families."

"Why girls more than boys?" asked Georgy, who was near enough to hear.

"Because girls cannot go out into the world and make honours and fame for themselves. Boys can. If I were a girl I should feel as Arbell does. But, though I see it is a very fine thing in some respects to have *ancestors*, yet, for myself, I would rather make my way in the world without the honour of an ancient lineage."

"I had no idea you were so humble!" said Georgy.

"I had no idea you were so proud!" said Arbell, and she looked at him earnestly. "You are a great deal prouder than I am, Oswald, and they tell me *I* am proud. We shall see in a few

years how well you can do in the world without ancestors."

"*You* think I should be more honourable with a long line of them at my back, as *you* have?" asked Oswald, a little disdainfully.

"No. I think you will be honourable or not, by yourself alone, quite independently of ancestors. Ancestors can't make a man good or bad."

"But, I think they help a little," said Georgy. "One fears to disgrace them by bad conduct. I should not like to be low-born, and I don't really believe anybody would, if they could help it. Come, Arbell! It's of no use arguing with Oswald. He won't change his opinion for us. Come and see your ancestors, in spite of all his disparaging remarks."

"Will you come and see them too?" asked Arbell, looking at Oswald.

"I think I had better come and introduce you to them, or else you will not know one from another," he said, smiling good-humouredly again. "There is not any one here who has studied the picture gallery but myself. I know them all by heart. I used to be here a great deal."

"How came *you* to take so great an interest in my ancestors?" asked Arbell, smiling.

Oswald smiled too, but made no answer. This excited Arbell's curiosity. "It cannot be because of his interest in *me* (though he does like me, I know), because he knew nothing about me till five weeks ago. I think he seems fond of my grandfather; perhaps that made him care for these dingy old portraits?" she thought to herself, as they walked along the gallery, and he told them the names and histories of each individual in the

series, from Marmaduke Dudley, who built the castle, in the reign of Henry VIII., down to Sir William and Lady Dudley, who flourished at the court of George III.

They were all listening very intently to Oswald's account of the famous Sir James, who died at Marston Moor, when "the elders" came to look after them.

"Acting the *cicerone*, Oswald!" exclaimed General Dudley, laying his hand on the boy's shoulder. "You are well qualified for the office. I believe he knows more about these good folks," glancing along the gallery, "than I do myself. But come, now, and have some coffee;" and he took Arbell by the hand, and led her along the gallery to a door at the farther end, which they had not yet seen. The others all followed.

Oswald took Georgy apart to look at a portrait he thought like Arbell.

"Tell me how it is that you are so interested in the Dudley family," she asked.

"I thought *you* might have heard. I am the heir-at-law to the Glenara property, if General Dudley dies without making a will."

Georgy stopped short, in astonishment. "And now that Arbell is found, you think it likely that he will make a will and give everything to her?"

"Yes; I hope he will. He ought to do so."

"But you have been led to believe this place would be *yours* some day?"

"Yes; but what of that? It is only justice to help to restore it to the right owner. I have ventured to tell General Dudley so; and he thinks so too, now. He is very passionate, and if you offend him he hardly ever forgives; but when he

once takes a liking to any one he sticks to them. He has taken a great liking to his grand-daughter ever since he first saw her. No wonder! She is a sweet girl!"

"But you," said Georgy. "You will, now, have no fortune. But perhaps your father is rich. Manufacturers generally are, are they not?"

My father is not. I shall have to work hard, now. But what of that? I am young and strong. My father will give me a good education, and you know 'learning is better than house or land.' Besides, you remember what I said, just now, about making my way to fame independently of ancestors. It's much the same thing making one's way to fortune without a fortune to begin with. I am so pleased that Arbell really is Captain Dudley's daughter. I never felt satisfied that the child was dead, as was reported here. Mr. Casterton and I have had some long confabs about this business. What a first-rate fellow he is! At last we spoke to the General about it; and then we found that *he* had been thinking just as we had. That if Arbell (I can't help calling her *Arbell*, though I suppose it's not quite proper), that if she really were the daughter of Captain and Mrs. Dudley, he ought to leave the estate to her, instead of letting it go to me. He had no doubt in his own mind that she was his grand-daughter, from her strong likeness to his son; but Mr. Casterton procured all the proper evidence on the subject, and laid it before him, and I was contented when he said, 'Oswald, you must make way for this little girl.'"

"But how was it that we knew nothing of this?" asked Georgy.

"Because," said Oswald, "men do not go chat-

tering about every affair of business to their neighbours, as women and girls do. I have been a fool to tell you all this, now; for I begin to fear that you will go and tell it to Arbell."

"Not if you do not wish it. And I really think that it would make her uncomfortable to know that she had deprived you of an estate which you had been taught to look upon as your own. And you have not lost it yet. Perhaps Arbell may displease this bad-tempered old grandfather. She's got a will of her own, I can tell you."

"What are you two doing here?" asked Cuthbert, coming to look for them in the gallery. "General Dudley wants you both directly. Arbell is rather in a *quandary*, I fancy, for she has got to pour out the coffee, and they have given her a huge silver coffee-pot, which she can hardly lift, I can see. And there's another great thing at another table that *you* are to pour something out of—tea or chocolate, so *I* offer my services to help *you*. Oswald, I suppose, will go and assist the Lady of the Castle. Make haste, there's a good fellow, for she's dreadfully nervous; and the old gentleman doesn't see that it is as much as she can do to lift that great thing with her two hands."

They hastened into the banqueting-room, and beheld a very pretty sight. It was a handsome, lofty apartment. A large mullioned window occupied nearly the whole of one side. The other three sides were hung with fine old tapestry, and the ceiling was covered with a picture of the triumphs of Bacchus. The colours on the ceiling and walls were very bright. Several large tables of carved wood were covered with a profusion of fruits, flowers, cakes, and all sorts of sweetmeats. Junkets, syllas-

bubs, and cream, filled various silver and porcelain vases ; while tea and coffee steamed in others. The cups and plates were of rare old porcelain, and their colours were as brilliant as those of the fruit and flowers. Massy silver and gold salvers and baskets, that glittered among them, contained bread in almost every form and kind. Round these tables were seated young and merry creatures, whose animated faces and gestures, and whose ringing laughter showed that this was, indeed, what a feast ought to be—full of joy and social kindness. Nor did the table where Arbell presided form an exception to the rest ; for her grandfather and Mr. Casterton seemed as happy as if they had not grey hair on their heads and a world of sad recollection in their minds. She sat between them. Mr. and Mrs. St. John, and some other ladies and gentlemen sat round this table, and were almost as merry as their children.

When Oswald came up to Arbell with an offer of assistance in her arduous task, she very gladly made room for him at her side, and General Dudley seemed pleased that Oswald had thought of coming.

When this pleasant meal was over, the whole company, young and old, went up to the top of the great tower, where the flag was, in order to see the view from thence.

“Are those the Dudley Arms ?” asked Georgy of Oswald, pointing to the flag, as it waved above her head.

“Yes. I had that flag hoisted on the very day the General said he should acknowledge Arbell as his grand-daughter. I sent it up myself, with Baines’ help.”

"I remember that very well. Arbell and I were on the Fell at the time, and we saw it go up. She wondered what it was put up for."

"Who will like to venture into the ruined part of the Castle?" asked the General, who was now ready to join in any amusement with the young people, and seemed as gay as any of them. He held Arbell's hand.

"Oh! let us go, grandpapa!" she exclaimed, "I never thought of that!"

And away they went to explore a portion of the edifice that had long been left to decay. It was very picturesque to look at, and rather dangerous to climb; but Arbell, who, as we have had occasion to say before, was a capital climber, contrived to scramble safely to the highest point. Her grandfather, however, had privately deputed Oswald to keep close to her, in case she should slip. Once she did slip, and in rather a dangerous place, too: this brought Helvellyn to their minds; they both looked gravely at each other, and Arbell went on more carefully afterwards.

When they had all come safely out of the ruin—safely as regards life and limb, but with considerable injury to muslin frocks and smart sashes—the General told them that the hall was now prepared for a dance. Some musicians had been sent for from Kendal, and everything was ready. There was a general shout of delight at this, and they all hastened to the hall.

It was broad daylight, and the great doors stood open, through which they could look out into the open country. The grown-up people sat down quietly, to watch the dancers, and converse. The servants stood looking on, at the other, and in the

middle of the hall those twenty happy girls and boys danced away to their heart's content. At last the General gave a signal to stop. It was getting dark, and many of the party had a long way to go.

"This merry meeting must disperse," said Mr. Casterton. "Girls, put on your shawls. James is bringing the carriage round."

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" resounded on all sides. "Don't go yet! Wait just a little longer."

Arbell and Georgy whispered together for a moment. "He is never well if he sits up late."

"Dear Uncle! Yes, we *ought* to go! But it is very disagreeable!" and they began to bid good-bye. When Arbell came to the General, he put his arms round her—

"Good night, my dear. You will see me again to-morrow. God bless you!"

In another five minutes the carriage was rolling over the Fell, and the two girls were assuring their uncle that this had been the very happiest evening of their lives.

"But how very unfashionable you are here!" said Georgy. "We are invited to tea at five o'clock, and we make our appearance a few minutes before the time."

"That is considered polite in our part of the world: we go at the time we are invited."

"Then to come away so early! In London, even a juvenile party is kept up till twelve."

"That is foolish and unhealthy," observed Mr. Casterton. "I think we manage these things better among us."

"So do I," said Arbell. "This evening is perfect."

CHAPTER X.

ARBELL'S CHOICE.

"From my succession wipe me,—I
Am heir to my affections."

SHAKSPEARE.

"Sure when the separation has been tried,
That we who part in love shall meet again."

WORDSWORTH.

"ARBELL! Little Arbell! where are you? Where can she have hidden herself?" said Georgy Caster-ton, as she began climbing up the rocks of the waterfall. "It's of no use calling to her in the midst of this 'splashing, and dashing, and flashing, and clashing;' I may as well save my breath. I'm sure she has come here to think, and settle her mind. It's the last place *I* should come to for *that*. It puts my ideas in an uproar to see this excited stream tumbling and foaming, and making such a work. Oh dear! I hope she is not far off, for General Dudley is not the sort of person to be kept waiting. She knew he was coming to-day; she ought not to have gone out of sight of the house; but, poor thing, I suppose she is rather afraid of this meeting. I know how it will end. She will be obliged to come and live here. What a happy life she will lead! Arbell, Arbell," she shouted, once more; and just then she espied the object of

her search, seated on a mossy stone near the top of the fall, busily reading a letter.

"Arbell! you tiresome little thing, I have had such a search for you. General Dudley is at the house, and wishes to see you. Make haste! Put up Miss Travers' letter."

"Oh, Georgy! I do so dread this meeting. I am almost sure my grandfather will want me to stay with him."

"There is nothing very terrible in that, I think. Mind how you come down that bit, it's very slippery."

"No! but how can I be so ungrateful as to leave Miss Travers in this way?"

"But it is your grandpapa who does it, not you. A girl like you is not her own mistress."

"That is just where my difficulty is. Though I am only a girl, I am old enough to see right from wrong—old enough to be grateful. Aunt Harriet has been more than a mother to me. No, Georgy, I will not do what I feel to be wrong. As yet I have been nothing but a trouble to her; and now I am growing up, I *might* be of use if I were with her. You do not know how she loves me. I am sure it would make her very, very unhappy to lose me. I have never felt towards her as I ought. I hate myself when I think that I have sometimes felt as if she were no more to me than she is to the other girls. Since I have been away from her I have thought over all that she has done for me, and begin to see how selfish and ungrateful I have been."

"*You* selfish and ungrateful! You might just as well say you were blind and lame. Don't talk nonsense! Make haste to your grandpapa, and

remember that he is the person you ought to obey.”

“I do not think *that*. What shall I do? Mr. Casterton says, ‘Wait till the time comes.’ It puzzles me a great deal; but I have come to the conclusion that I ought to try to please Aunt Harriet before my grandpapa. She has done everything for me, and my mother gave me into her charge. Hannah says that my mother, on her deathbed, made Aunt Harriet promise to bring me up as her own child. She has done so. She loves me dearly.”

“But General Dudley has property to leave you, and he is your father’s father.”

“Because he is my father’s father I feel quite wretched at the thought of disobeying his wish, if it *should* be his wish that I should live with him henceforth. I feel that he is my near relation, and that I should learn to love him in time; but when I think that it is on account of *the property* that I am wanted to go to live with him, and leave my dear Aunt, who has given me the best of everything she had, and that she has *earned* it herself—not had it without earning—I feel as if it would be the meanest, basest ingratitude. No, Georgy! I cannot leave her willingly. They may force me, I know; but of my own accord I will not. No, I will go back and help to teach in the school all the days of my life, rather. I will not be ungrateful!”

“But if they told your aunt all this, and *she* should wish you to leave her?” asked Georgy, who thought *that* was probable.

“I asked Uncle Stuart not to do that; and he said he would not. She might fancy it would be

best for me, and would never think about herself."

"You must go into the study just as you are, dear," said Georgy, as they entered the house. "Uncle said I was to tell you that you must come quickly. Go, dear! you are sure to get on well. I know you will do right, because you are so anxious about it.—Give me a kiss.—I shall be in a fever till I see you again. Come to my room when it is all over." And they separated at the door of the study.

Arbell opened it with a trembling hand, and went in.

Mr. Casterton and her grandfather were seated on opposite sides of the writing-table. Her grandfather looked angry, and Mr. Casterton seemed as if he had been much vexed.

"Come here, my love! I have something to say to you, and I must say it quickly; for I am in a hurry," said her grandfather, turning round with a stern, decisive, soldierlike air. "You are my grand-daughter, and I intend to make you my heiress, and will take you home to live with me immediately.—You understand that?—Now, then, I should like to pay back to this schoolmistress, who has taken care of you since your infancy, all the money which she has spent on your account. I should like her to be paid double the usual price for pupils. Sit down, and calculate how much that will be." And he pushed a pen and some paper across the table to her.

Arbell felt the blood mount into her cheeks; and she stood staring at the paper, without moving. She was indignant and deeply pained.

"What is the matter?" asked her grandfather.

"Can you not calculate a simple sum of that kind, my dear?"

"No, Sir," she replied, losing all fear in the strength of her indignation, and then finding the words come easily enough; so that she was astonished afterwards, when she reflected over it all. "I cannot calculate the sum of what I owe to the lady who has been mother, father, and all relations to me. *You can't do it.* No one can do it. And if *you could* calculate it, I should deserve never to have a friend any more if *I* insulted her by offering to pay it in money.—She loves me as her own child! You cannot pay her for her love and kindness to me; but I will pay her in gratitude.—I would rather go back to her, and work for her when she is old, than I would be your heiress, and send her the money she has willingly spent for me since I was taken, in charity, into her house!"

The astonishment of General Dudley at this speech from a little, gentle-looking girl, can scarcely be described. He had seldom been contradicted; and few persons ever ventured to tell him that they disapproved of his conduct. After looking at her for a few moments, he burst into an ungovernable rage—

"You are your father's child, indeed! Disobedient, and ridiculously perverse in your notions. Do as you please. I need not look far for an heir. As you prefer the low society in which you have been brought up to that of the rank in which you were born, in Heaven's name go back to it, and never let me hear your name or see your face more! I thought better of you; they told me you were worthy to be of my family.—Mr. Casterton, things have taken a new turn. If the girl does

not come to me willingly (a thing I could not have anticipated), I shall make no effort to retain her. Good morning!" And seizing his hat, he rose in great anger.

Arbell darted forward. "Forgive me! I did not mean to make you angry, grandpapa!"

"Grandpapa! Do not call me by that name! I shall never call you grand-daughter again. Go, and keep a school for the rest of your life, and be a disgrace to your name. Miss Dudley, *the schoolmistress by choice!* Don't come before me again. Disappointed, even in *you*, whom I thought I could bind to me! You a Dudley, indeed! You the heiress of Glenara! No, you cannot be both a schoolkeeper's assistant and the mistress of Glenara Castle. You have chosen between the two. I give you one more opportunity of revoking your choice, Arabella Dudley. Will you come to me, and be a lady, or will you go back to this person who has brought you up? I will not force your inclinations. I need not thrust my kindness on any one."

Again Arbell was roused. "I would rather go and live with Miss Travers in a garret than be mistress of your fine castle. I never wish to see any of my relations who are not grateful to *her*. She is as good as any of them. Better than they are, perhaps."

Her grandfather moved his lips as if he would say something.

Mr. Casterton then rose and desired Arbell to leave the room, in a sad, but not in an angry tone.

Arbell did so gladly, and ran to her own room. She hardly knew herself; she felt so angry and

indignant. When she had locked the door, she began walking up and down the room, pushing away with violence everything that was in her path.

"*This is the way my proud, rich relation would wish me to treat her! Pay her money! I wonder he was not ashamed to propose such a thing. To me, too! I pay Aunt Harriet,—I, or my relations, (which is the same thing.) Ungrateful! mean!* This is the sort of pride which people boast of, is it?—The pride of the Dudleys! Thank God, I am without it! Dear aunt! That any one belonging to the child you took into your house in charity should dare to say such things of you. A school-mistress! Well, what is there disgraceful in that? *Low society!* Sure am I that in all my life with you I should never hear anything so *low* as this ingratitude and mean pride of my grandfather. Grandfather! I have none. I will have no more relations, if they are like this!"

And the agitated, angry girl threw herself on the bed, and burst into a passionate flood of tears. When this had subsided, she fell asleep from exhaustion. She slept for several hours. During that time Hannah and Georgy came to the door several times, and finding it fastened, concluded that she heard, but did not choose to admit them. At last they became uneasy, and Georgy told her uncle that Arbell had locked herself in her room, and would not answer them. He was rather alarmed, for he had had evidence of her passionate temper, when once she was roused, and went himself to the door. This time she heard the knocking, and awoke.

"What has happened?" thought she, the first

moment afterwards; the second, she called out, "Who is there?"

"Are you ill? Open the door," said Mr. Casterton.

She rose, and stood before the anxious trio.

"I am quite well. I was asleep. Uncle, may I come and speak with you presently?"

"You may come now, my dear." And scarcely noticing Georgy or Hannah, she passed them and went to his study.

"Her pride is up, I see," said Hannah. "What has that old General done to her? It is *his* fault, I am certain."

Georgy looked after Arbell with tears in her eyes.

When Arbell had closed the study door, she went up to her uncle, and putting her arms round his neck, said,—

"Will you forgive me for my passionate temper? But, indeed, indeed, it was hard to bear what my grandfather said! If you knew all that Aunt Harriet has done for me, and how careless and ungrateful I have hitherto been, you would not blame me so much."

"My dear," said Mr. Casterton, "I do not blame you for what you said to General Dudley, except as to the *manner* of it. You were too violent. You could have shown your love and gratitude to your benefactress without getting into a passion with your grandfather. But I thought your decision a right one—one that God and your own conscience will approve. Your first *earthly* duty is to Miss Travers. Perhaps your grandfather may live to think so. If he does not, you will, I am sure, never repent your choice."

"Never!" said Arbell, emphatically. "I would not leave Aunt Harriet for all the castles and estates—not even for all the *grandfathers* in the world—though I did so long to find out my relations. So that is settled; and *she* need know nothing about it. And now the sooner I leave this beautiful place the better. It tempts me to be discontented with my old home. I shall not feel safe now till I am once more in that little Green Parlour, far away from Glenara and Blacktarn. I have been very happy—too happy, here; but I will now go back to dear Aunt, for ever!"

On the appointed morning, the two girls, attended by Hannah, returned to London.

This eventful visit was over, and now they were to return to the old routine of school—the dull every-day life.

"How shall we bear it?" asked Georgy, as they were flying along the railway.

"Oh," said Arbell, "we shall find it strange and dull at first, but in a little time we shall be quite used to it again. Don't you remember, you and I used to be very happy together? Now we shall be happier still. We shall have so many more things to talk about."

"This has been quite a wonderful visit for you, Arbell; but it has not been all pleasure."

"No, indeed," said Arbell, shaking her head.

"If you could have your choice, would you rather never have been to Blacktarn and Glenara at all? You would have been saved much pain; and, I dare say, you would have had a happy time with Miss Travers and Mrs. Vernon at the seaside."

"Oh, no!" said Arbell; "even if I had not had

that long conversation with dear Uncle, last night ; when he made me feel that we cannot alter God's dispensations for the better—even if I did not see the wickedness, as well as the folly, of wishing things could be altered just to suit my fancy, I would not be without the recollection of this visit to Blacktarn. I have had some pain, and all my hope of finding near relations to love me is quite gone ; but I have had a great deal more pleasure than pain. Besides, *you* and uncle are my relations, that is some comfort ; though I can't say that I love you a bit better than if you were not. No ! no ! this visit has been a happy one, in spite of the end. That took up a very short time, too. The worst part was soon over. I have learned more about myself and other people in these five weeks than I ever learned before in a year."

"Besides, my dear," said Hannah, "you have the comfort of knowing that you have done what you feel to be right. Do that always, and you can never be very unhappy. Even if you were to be quite poor—to have to beg—to be sickly—if you always try to do what you know to be right, you can never have a *bad conscience*. That's the worst misfortune I know of."

Hannah's talk of a bad conscience may sound rather strangely to some of my readers ; but it did not sound strangely to Arbell. She had been early taught that to do wrong when she knew what was right—"to see the best and yet pursue the worst,"—was the greatest sin of which she could be guilty. That it was weak and wicked—that it was stifling the voice of God, she knew—for Miss Travers had made her feel that *conscience* (that feeling by which we know at once, without talking about it, what is

right or wrong), is the voice of our heavenly Father directing us; that to disobey this voice—to let our conscience speak unregarded, is to be really wicked.

Now, young people have a conscience; and if they will not listen to it and obey it, in spite of tempting pleasures, they are weak and wicked, and will be certainly unhappy until they see their error and repent it. It is the most important thing for us all, old and young, to keep a conscience clear before God. I do not say it is always *easy*. It is *not*. Things in this world are mixed, good and evil; it is often difficult to tell, when we stop to think, and balance and weigh them, whether they contain most good or evil; but when we are called upon to act, to make a choice, a decision—it is generally safest to act according to the dictates of conscience. Let no one fear that, in any case of real moral difficulty, our conscience will fail to speak. It always does speak, only sometimes we will not listen to it. No one, who has had a fair education, can say with truth, that he or she was guilty of an immoral act—lying, duplicity, ingratitude, treachery, meanness—for want of a guide to say “*You cannot do so or so without offending God and injuring your own soul.*” Every one, young or old, has such a guide—a better one than any other:—the voice of God within us—our conscience. Happy are those who, like Arbell Dudley, have never attempted to stifle it—to explain away its simple meaning in childhood. When they grow up they feel the sanctifying effects of a *habit* of unselfish conscientiousness. The voice of our conscience speaks always an *unselfish* verdict. It is the spirit

within us which wars against the flesh. It is God's voice within us, speaking for Him and for our neighbour, against our own selfish and earthly propensities. Let the very youngest, who can understand these words, remember that in them too speaks the voice of God.

A R B E L L.

THE CONCLUSION.

THE CONCLUSION.

“I saw her, upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman too.”

WORDSWORTH.

“Wait, my faith is large in time,
And that which shapes it to some perfect end.”

TENNYSON.

MORE than three years after her memorable visit to the north, and fourteen years after her first introduction to the reader, Arbell was sitting in the Green Parlour at Eastgate House, on a certain winter's afternoon. It was Christmas Eve again—the anniversary of her mother's death, and of her arrival in that house. It was a cold, snowy afternoon, just as it had been then, Miss Travers remembered. She always noted the weather on every Christmas Eve. Arbell had found that out, and concluded that some Christmas Eves, in years gone by, had been more full of joy or sorrow to her than other days in the year. Therefore on Christmas Eve Arbell was more than usually attentive to her; on this one, in particular, she had refused an invitation from Georgy Casterton to join a merry party at her home, and had devoted herself to Aunt Harriet, although even Mrs. Vernon had urged her to go.

“No, I would rather stay here, thank you; I am much happier here,” she said.

All the morning Arbell had been busy in domestic work, for Aunt Harriet's rheumatism made it painful and imprudent for her to move out of the warm Green Parlour; and Mrs. Vernon was never able to bear much bodily fatigue. Arbell had run up and down stairs to the linen presses, and the store closets, to the kitchen and the cellars, with keys, and jars, and baskets in her hands, at least one hundred times that morning. In the afternoon she found that there was still something for her to do. Mrs. Green was ill, and Sarah had gone out for a holiday; so she carried the raisins for the morrow's pudding up to the Green Parlour, and, tying her storeroom-apron over her pretty crimson merino frock, she sat down in a low chair, and commenced the tedious operation of taking out the stones from the fruit. She had entered the room very quietly, because she suspected that Mrs. Vernon and Miss Travers would be asleep, and her suspicion was correct. There they lay, on either side of the fireplace, on the sofas where she had made them comfortable before she last left the room, and each was fast asleep. As the flames leaped up in the grate they threw a strong light on the faces of the sleepers.

Arbell looked from one to the other, and thought "How dear they are to me! How kind, and good, and clever they are! How I love them! *Once* I was beginning to love *her* the best," looking at Mrs. Vernon, "because she was always so quiet and gentle. But now I love dear Aunt Harriet a *leetle* the best. What a generous, noble creature she is! She does not think of her own pleasure or profit in anything! She will let people take a dislike to her rather than not tell them what she knows

it is for their good to know. That *is* unselfish. She is not one of those envious, disagreeable people who really enjoy saying unpleasant things. No, I don't believe there is anybody in the world who likes to be loved by those about her more than aunt does, not even I myself, and that's saying a great deal, for I think Georgy is right, and I am *greedy* after love. Dear, dear Aunt ! Oh, if anything should happen to take me away from you, you would indeed be *poor*, as you say. And I, what should I do if I had not you to help and think about ? Suppose three years ago I had stayed at Glenara, what would you and Mrs. Vernon be doing now?"

The thought of Glenara awoke a whole train of other thoughts that always lay packed close beside it in Arbell's mind, and she turned her eyes on the fire, and began to muse over the past. Sometimes she looked very grave, and frowned a little, as if the thought displeased or puzzled her. At other times she smiled ; and once she nearly laughed out, but hastily put a raisin into her mouth to stop the outburst, for she never could laugh *quietly*. No girl ever laughed more heartily than Arbell. It was a regular peal of silver bells.

Before the flames die quite down, let us take a look at her, and see what sort of a young lady she is now. In the first place, she is decidedly *not* tall, and is still frequently called " Little Arbell." This is, I believe, a source of regret to her, for she admires tall and graceful figures very much, and thinks that if she were only as tall as Georgy, who is five feet seven, she should be satisfied with her person. Now, her friends are satisfied with it as it is. She is a beautiful little creature ; delicate and fragile, but not unhealthy looking. She is much plumper and rosier

than she was when she went to Blacktarn. Her eyes are as blue, and more full of intelligence and feeling, than they were then. Her hair is as golden, and falls in longer curls round a very noble-looking head. She has changed but little; and that little is for the better. This is exactly what might have been expected from the nature of her daily life. She is always employed either in cultivating her own mind or in helping others to cultivate theirs; in active exercise, in or out of the house, and in thinking of other people, and doing what she can for their comfort and happiness. She has had little of what is called gaiety, and as yet she says that she enjoys her usual life at Eastgate House more than any visiting; because in visiting she feels as if she had nothing to do, and that is a thing which nature and education have conspired to make distasteful to her. She has taken kindly to all Miss Travers' industrious maxims and verses, and hums them about the house to tunes of her own, like any other bee. She has learned a new one lately, and is humming it to herself at this moment, unconsciously—

“ Eschew the idle life;
Flee, flee from doing nought,
For never was there idle brain
But bred an idle thought.”

This little humming awakes Miss Travers, who lies still, however, and says nothing; but watches her darling as she sits before the fire, moving her graceful head from side to side, to the half inaudible tune, while her nimble fingers take up the plums and lay them down again very fast. Presently the last little flame dies down, and the room is dark.

"Arbell, my dear, stir the fire and make a blaze; I cannot see you," said Miss Travers, in a low tone, still without moving.

"If I do that, Aunt, I shall wake Mrs. Vernon," whispered Arbell. "Poor thing, she is very tired and ill."

"That's a good girl—don't wake her," replied Miss Travers, in the same low tone, but with a very tender accent; "I did not think of it. The fact is, I was thinking of nothing but myself and my darling girl, and what a pleasure it is to see you beside me. Come and give me a kiss, if you can't stir the fire."

"My hands are all sticky—mind you don't touch them, dear!" said Arbell, as she bent down her face to Miss Travers.

"What were you thinking of so intently? I have been watching you for several minutes. You seem to have something on your mind," said Miss Travers, holding the fresh young face between her two hands and kissing it affectionately.

"Something on my mind!" said Arbell, suppressing a laugh, for fear of awaking Mrs. Vernon; "I should hope I had, after all these years of instruction. Mrs. Vernon would say that I deserved to have no mind at all, if I had not got something on it by this time."

Miss Travers kissed her again, and said—

"Don't be witty, if you can help it, but tell me, what were you thinking about?—you looked so very grave."

Arbell replied, "I was thinking of my grandfather—wondering whether he was better now, and wishing he would have proper medical attendance. But, I suppose, it is of no use wishing that. Uncle

Stuart's last letter says that he is more violent and obstinate than ever. Whenever you see me look very grave or uncomfortable, you may be sure I am thinking about my grandfather. I don't think I have any other trouble."

The young girl drew her chair close beside Miss Travers, and they went on talking in a low tone.

"Arbell, my dear, would you like to go down to Glenara, and help to nurse your grandfather? I shall be quite glad to let you go, if you wish it. Hannah can go with you. We can manage it."

Arbell kissed her once more. "I should like it, but I don't see that it would be quite right for me to go. He has not sent for me, you know. It is only *my* wish. Perhaps when I got there he would not see me. I do not like to leave you, especially now that Mrs. Vernon is not well, and we are obliged to have one servant less. Besides, we forget; it would cost more than ten pounds for Hannah and me to go to Blacktarn and back, and it won't do to throw that money away merely upon a whim of mine. I dare say I could do my grandfather no real good. He has every comfort that money can give; and as for my love, he does not want *that*. No, I only thought it would be a satisfaction to me to see him, and nurse him if he is ill."

"Perhaps you are right, dear," said Miss Travers,—"he might behave unkindly to you if you were to go without being sent for, as he has not noticed your existence in any way since your meeting at Blacktarn. The ten pounds, too, must be considered, my little economist. If we are ruined, it won't be through your extravagance."

"Nor through Mrs. Green's either," said Arbell, laughing,—"she and I have almost quarrelled

twenty times to-day. She gets more and more stingy every week—will hardly let the servants have enough to eat, or candles to go to bed by; and actually told me that they wanted no pudding in the kitchen to-morrow—that it didn't agree with any of them! I could scarcely help laughing, and yet I wanted to kiss her, too; for I knew what her motive was: and yet, Aunt, I coloured and felt ashamed. I could not bear to think that the servants know we are pressed for money."

"It is a disagreeable thing, certainly, my dear; but, in the present case, it is easy to bear. Our money difficulties do not come from carelessness or extravagance on our part, but from bad debts. And don't you think it is a beautiful thing to see the best feelings of our inferiors in station called out by sympathy for us? What did you say about the pudding, my dear?"

"I said, of course, that *you* would wish them to have one as usual; and desired her to make it."

"Well, my dear, I will not countermand your order, as you are now a person in authority; but *I* should have allowed Mrs. Green to see that I understood and accepted that little sacrifice. Such trifles go far to cement a union between masters and servants."

"What are you two whispering about?" asked Mrs. Vernon, raising her head from the pillow, and turning to look at them. "Why!—it is so dark I can scarcely see you!"

"Would you mind stirring the fire?" asked Arbell of Mrs. Vernon. "I am stoning raisins, and my fingers are sticky."

"Stoning raisins! What an occupation for the parlour!" said Mrs. Vernon. "Why are you obliged

to do that? Could not Green or Hannah do it?"

Mrs. Vernon was rather sorry to see Arbell engaged in any work which was not strictly suited to a young lady. She always preferred to do such things herself, rather than allow Arbell to soil her hands. Miss Travers, on the contrary, did not dislike to see Arbell take a share of the unpleasant as well as the pleasant work of the house. She believed that it was best for her to do so. Mrs. Vernon stirred the fire and made a blaze.

"How are you now?" she asked, looking at Miss Travers. "As much better, I hope, for your sleep, as I am for mine."

"Oh yes," replied her friend. "I am quite warm and comfortable."

"Well, then, it is a very good time to ask a favour from you, Aunty," said Arbell.

"A very good time, indeed. I feel as if I could not possibly say *no* to any request. What is it you want me to do?"

"Shall I tell her now?" asked Arbell, glancing at Mrs. Venon.

"Yes, my dear; the sooner you tell her the better."

"Then, said Arbell, putting her sweet face close to Miss Travers, "Mrs. Vernon thinks I am now quite forward enough in music to take Miss Steel's place. Miss Steel's salary saved would really be something gained for us, you know; and I am so anxious to gain some money! Miss Steel grumbles about her situation, and she is so cross to the little ones, it makes them really hate music; and that is a shocking thing, you know. I have thought about turning Miss Steel out of her situation, and

was at first very uncomfortable about it ; but I have talked about my plan to Mrs. Vernon, and she says that it is a right one, and we are to try and make you think so.—Now, let me say a little more before you speak.—I know, dear Aunt, that you would rather see me going about as I have been, doing very little, *really*, to help you ; only improving and enjoying myself.—Oh yes ! It is all very well to say that my teaching those five or six little things is *really* helping you. I want to show you that I can be of more use. That is the reason I have given so much time to music lately. I want to do something with my talent and the little knowledge I have. If you will let me, I can save you fifty pounds a year (that is half the rent of the house, you know); and then there would be Miss Steel's room for that young lady who wanted to come here as a parlour-boarder, and whose parents would pay ever so much money for her to be with you.”

Miss Travers was unable to speak for a moment. At length she put her hand on Arbell's head. “And so this busy little brain has turned itself into a sort of arithmetical machine lately. You want to multiply our gains and reduce our expenditure. My poor, dear child, it makes me uncomfortable that you should be troubled in this manner. You must not think I am going to the workhouse immediately, because I thought we ought to manage with one servant less. I have had serious losses ; but I hope to have no more.”

“Aunty, dear, I know very well that you have lost a great deal of money by unprincipled people ; and you cannot afford to lose money. I am getting quite to understand business, thanks to Mrs. Vernon. Now, I know that when people lose money in one

way they ought to save it in other ways. We can do very well, as you have seen, without Susan; and we got *her* a good place. Now, let us see if we cannot do very well without Miss Steel; and Mrs. Vernon thinks that she could find her a situation that would suit her better than remaining here."

Mrs. Vernon here said a few words, intimating her entire concurrence in Arbell's wish, and her conviction that the pupils would be better taught by Arbell, with a few hints from herself and the music-master, than they had been by Miss Steel. A very little more talk sufficed to overcome Miss Travers' dislike to place her young favourite in so arduous an office; and it was agreed that she should write that very evening to inform Miss Steel of her new plans, and to promise every assistance in her power towards getting her a better situation than the one of which she was about to deprive her.

"Then it *is* settled! Oh, how glad I am. Now I really shall have *enough* to do. I never have had enough to do yet. And it will be such a comfort to me to think that I am helping to lessen the expenses. Now I have done the raisins. I will just run down stairs with them; and then I must go up stairs and wash my hands, and make my hair neat for tea. You won't want the lamp till I come back. You two dearly love a talk in the dark, I know. When I come back, we will have the lamp, and I will read some more of Wordsworth. How glad I am to find that I can understand him. I used to wonder, I remember, whatever you could both see in him to like so very much better than Mrs. Hemans. I begin to see now. I suppose Mrs. Hemans is one of those

writers you were speaking of the other day, who is especially pleasing to young and half-formed minds. Ah ! it makes me sad to think that I shall not always like best the things, and people, and amusements I like best now."

"Are you sad now, my dear, because you like Wordsworth better than Mrs. Hemans ? Are you sad because you like playing at chess or painting a landscape better than trundling a hoop or making a daisy-chain?" asked Mrs. Vernon, smiling.

"Yes, I am sometimes. It may be silly—but then I have not quite left off liking Mrs. Hemans. And I trundled a hoop with little Rose the other day with great pleasure, I can tell you. Still, I like Wordsworth, and chess, and drawing, much best, of course. It is only that I can't bear to feel myself changing."

"Go and wash your hands, my child," said Miss Travers, "and never mind the changes, provided they are always for the better. Remember, dear, that *change*, or, in other words, *growth*, is the law of the highest sort of life with which we are acquainted. It is God's law; and, however painful we may feel it to be occasionally (and all thinking men and women *do* feel it), yet we may be quite sure that His law we cannot alter—it is inevitable, and that His law is the wisest, the most beneficent; and that, if we could alter it, it would assuredly be for the worse."

"Arbell begins to think and feel like a woman," said Mrs. Vernon. "It is well for her that she should have plenty of active, useful employment just now. In a mind like hers, too much time for introspection and speculative thinking would be

injurious. Give her work to do, and thought and feeling will not become morbid."

"She is a noble creature!" exclaimed Miss Travers; she will never go far wrong. Her principles, as well as her impulses, are good. Maria, what a blessed day it was for me that brought that child to my arms! It was about this time in the day, fourteen years ago. Ah! you were not here. Ever since that time I have been a happy woman. I hope we shall not have our future life clouded by these miserable money difficulties. Do not let her know more about them than we can help. The dear child will really be of use, *great* use, in the way she proposes; and I could not deny her the pleasure of knowing *that*, although it pains me to set her to actual world's work—*money work*, so soon. This is mere weakness, I know, but I cannot help remembering that she is the legitimate heir to eight thousand a year, and the last descendant of a great family."

"That is no reason why she should not have the pleasure of being useful," said Mrs. Vernon, quietly.

At this moment Arbell returned to the room, followed by Hannah, bearing a lamp.

"It is *so* cold; and it is snowing fast," said Arbell, rubbing her hands, and running to the fire. "I should not like to be travelling on such a day as this. It is quite dark now. Shut the shutters, Hannah."

"It is just such a day as it was fourteen years ago," said Miss Travers. Do you remember that day, Hannah?"

"If I live to see a hundred Christmas Eves, ma'am, I shall always think of that one more than

of the others. I've been thinking all the afternoon that the sky looked just the same as it did then."

Hannah had scarcely pronounced the words when a long, loud ring at the gate bell—the very same peal, it seemed, as the one that was heard on that former Christmas Eve—resounded in the snow-laden air. Miss Travers started up.

"How very strange! Who can that be?" and she drew Arbell to her suddenly.

Arbell laughed. "Is a ring at the gate so very strange, Aunt? You are quite nervous! Never mind who it is!" Then she suddenly became grave, and said in a whisper (for Hannah was still in the room), "Is it any one for money, do you think? Oh! these horrid Christmas bills. If it should be the baker, can't *I* see him for you, and tell him what you wish to have said? I won't mind it a bit. I will show you that I can learn to be practical as well as other folks."

Miss Travers smiled. "Your thoughts run only upon debt and money. I was not thinking of the baker or his bill just then. I thought of something very different. Hark! there is some one coming into the hall."

"Why do you hold me, dear Aunt? Sit down here."

They heard distinctly the steps of one or two persons—*men* they seemed—in the hall, and anxiously awaited Hannah's return, who was gone to inquire who were come. They had not long to wait; for Hannah ran, almost breathless, into the room again, and cried out—

"Oh! it's Mr. Casterton of Blacktarn! It is, indeed!" and almost at the same moment, that

gentleman appeared behind her, followed by some other person.

Arbell rushed to Mr. Casterton, and was folded in his arms.

"My dear child! are you glad to see me? I fear I have surprised you. A little disconcerted your quiet household, I fear, Miss Travers; but you will excuse that, I think. I hope you are better than you have been. And you, too, Mrs. Vernon. I am heartily glad to shake hands with you again."

Arbell still kept hold of his arm, and looked up into his face.

"Oh! Uncle! why did you not tell us you were coming? I can scarcely believe it is you, even now."

"It is, indeed, I myself, niece; and here is another old friend who is very anxious to see you."

Arbell turned to the person who had accompanied her uncle. He was a tall young man—neither dark nor fair—neither very handsome nor much the reverse, who stood with a half smile looking at her. She ought to know that smile.

"Yes, it is! It must be Oswald—Oswald Barton!" and she gave him her hand with a pleased expression of face.

Miss Travers and Mrs. Vernon both greeted the young man kindly; for they had formed a high opinion of his character.

Arbell stood looking at Oswald while they spoke to him.

"How changed he is! And yet it is the same nice face! How I wish Georgy were here!" she thought within herself.

Oswald turned to her, and they both felt for a few moments the restraint which comes over friends who meet after a long absence.

Mr. Casterton was speaking to the two ladies, and Oswald spoke to her.

"Have you forgotten Blacktarn?"

"No; I never can forget Blacktarn. Have you just come from there? I thought you were in Manchester."

"No; I have been at Glenara for the past week," he replied, looking gravely at her.

"Glenara! My grandfather! How is he?"

"We have come on purpose to tell you;" and he paused.

"Is he worse? Ah! he is dead! and her fair face was bent down, as if to conceal the expression of awe and pain which came over it at the thought of that proud old man dying without any kindred to soothe his last moments.

Oswald came a step nearer.

"He wished to see you—it was too late. But he desired me to tell you that he was very sorry that he had not behaved kindly to you. He blessed you, Arbell."

"Did he? Did he call me his grandchild, Oswald? Did he think of me on his deathbed?"

"Yes; I found out then that he had long thought of you as we would wish him to do—as his son's child and his heiress. You are now the owner of the Glenara property."

"I?—Not *you*? My uncle told me that you were the heir."

"Yes; I was the heir-at-law; but I have no claim on the property if your grandfather made a will in favour of any other person. He made a

will two days before he died. I was one of the witnesses. He has left the bulk of the property to you."

"Oswald, this is *your* doing. Yours and Uncle Casterton's."

"We have no intention of denying that. We used our influence with General Dudley to deal justly by his grand-daughter. I should have been ashamed to take possession of the property, when you have a much more equitable claim upon it. Let me congratulate you on being the Lady of Glenara, at last," he added, smiling.

She could not help smiling, too. She was really sorry to hear that her grandfather was dead, although he had behaved unkindly to her; but she smiled at the recollection of the last time she was at Glenara. Then the smile died away, and she stood looking at Oswald without thinking of him.

She thought, in one moment, of many things. Of her dear Aunt's money difficulties. First of all, *they* were ended. No more trouble from Christmas bills; no more bad debts; no more contriving and worrying to save a few pounds; no more anxiety and worry in the school! They should keep a school no longer! Aunt Harriet and Mrs. Vernon would go and live at Glenara Castle with her; and they would be as happy as they deserved to be! She should now become what, in her earliest dreams, she had fancied herself to be—a grand lady! what, in her enthusiastic young ambition, she had longed to be—the means of doing great good among the poor. At Glenara, with Aunt, and Mrs. Vernon, and Uncle Stuart to help me, I may be of great use!—*I thank God for giving me such an enlarged sphere of action!* and now I must look well that I neglect no duty.

They were all talking around her—but she heard not a word; her thoughts were wandering far away, in Blacktarn and Glenara. How happy she should be there! Georgy and Oswald must be there too, or she could not be quite happy, though: but Georgy would be in Richmond, and Oswald was in Manchester. They could not come and live at Glenara. Rich as she had now become, she could not have all her wishes gratified.

“She does not hear you: her thoughts are far away,” said Oswald to Miss Travers, who had called Arbell twice ineffectually.

“Arbell, my dear, Mr. Casterton and Mr. Barton will sleep here to-night: go and order Hannah to prepare the rooms; and let us have some tea. Afterwards, we will talk over this great news. What are you thinking of, my child?”

Mr. Casterton answered for her:

“She is thinking how the Lady of Glenara can best show gratitude. How the orphan school-girl can show the world that she has been brought up well. How the neglected daughter of an honoured house can increase its honour.—Is it not so, my child?” he asked, taking her hand affectionately. “Is not little Arbell thinking of her coming duties and joys as a great lady? Come to your paternal home, and show us that Solomon’s ‘virtuous woman’ may be found in these latter days.—‘She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also he praiseth her. Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.’”

"How much, how very much I have to be grateful for!" said Arbell, with streaming eyes and a swelling heart. "Will you all help me in the future as you have in the past? Will you all love me? Aunt, dear aunt, do not let them call me "Lady of Glenara." You are and must be the true mistress. I am your child, your own Arbell; and all that I have is yours. What can I have apart from you and Mrs. Vernon that could be valued by me? It is you who are the ladies of Glenara now. I am the girl you have trained into a happy woman—Arbell Dudley, the orphan—Little Arbell, the friendless baby who was brought here fourteen years ago."

"Yes," said Miss Travers. "We shall still be what we have been to each other; and dearer, I trust, with every coming year; but you cannot get rid of your responsibilities. You must 'do your duty in that state of life into which it has pleased God to call you.' Give to us what honour you may, it is you who are the descendant of the Dudleys."

"Long live Arbell, the Lady of Glenara!" said Oswald.

"Amen," said Mr. Casterton.

And so, I trust, say my readers.

THE END.

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